



End of Cycle Report

2016

UCAS Analysis and Research
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UCAS

Foreword

This is our seventh End of Cycle Report and my last as Chief Executive of UCAS. Our unique, centralised admissions service in the UK provides a rich data resource and we have made it a pillar of the work of the charity to use this to create deep insights into progression, participation, and equalities in higher education admissions. This year's report covers in depth some of the key issues for students and higher education. It is supported by new, powerful, interactive data explorers for investigating equality of access, and hundreds of data sets describing our system, adding to the millions of freely available data points we have on our website.

I doubt whether there has been a period in higher education where timely expert insight has been more important, as the experience of students and the shape of the sector has changed and changed again. This year, our analysis tracks the sector as it enters what we think will be several years of overall flat demand for undergraduate education, driven by demographic changes in the young population in the UK, and perhaps strong headwinds for demand from the EU and international students.

Two topics stand out for me over the period. The first is how the experience of students has changed, particularly for those in England, where the combination of higher fees and the removal of central controls on recruitment numbers have changed the relationship between students and universities. Many universities have responded to this new environment of flat demand and competitive recruitment by broadening their intake and, more often than not, recruiting students whose grades would not, in the past, have attracted an offer.

When I took over at UCAS in 2010, students chased places – now the places chase them. Students and their advisers are still adjusting to this new world: almost two thirds of students with some A level grade profiles get five out of five offers. While this might feel good for students, it almost certainly suggests they are not being ambitious enough in the universities or subjects they are choosing. My advice to students (and their parents) is to use one of their five choices for a stretching course they would love to do, and prepare to be surprised with an offer. The evidence suggests that an attractive and stretching offer can act as its own spur to higher achievement.

But for me, the second and most important set of findings over the period, and this year, is that of equality and what the findings say about unrealised potential among young people. The way UCAS measures equality has evolved, and we've gone from raw numbers to entry rates that take account of the population, then expanded the range of equality groups we can measure. Last year, we introduced a new approach to measuring equality, and with some further developments this year, we've put it at the centre of our reporting of these trends, and for good reason. By conflating the effect of many different dimensions of equality simultaneously, we now have a more complete picture of differences in entry to university than ever before.

There is much to celebrate in improvements to access over the last decade. Those young people with combinations of background characteristics associated with the lowest entry rates to higher education are over 70 per cent more likely to enter university today than they were in 2006. This central trend is reflected in several different ways. Ten years ago, there were almost 200 parliamentary constituencies where going to university was so unusual that fewer than one in five children did so. Today, only around 20 constituencies are in that category. Children living in the lowest income families are more likely than ever to enter higher education, 80 per cent more than a decade ago. Ten years ago, children in the Black ethnic group had the lowest chance of going to university – today, they are 80 per cent more likely to go to university, and more likely to go than young people on average.

It is right to proclaim these achievements. But something different stands out for me. So great were the differences in entry to higher education a decade ago that even these significant increases take us to a point of still unacceptable inequality of access. Simply because of combinations of characteristics such as income, sex, ethnic group, and where they live, some young people are four times more likely to enter higher education than others in their peer group. When we consider those universities with the highest entry requirements, that differential is more like ten times, meaning some universities are seemingly out of reach for great swathes of the population, by accident of birth.

Young people who come from poor families, or are men, or in the White ethnic group have no less intrinsic potential to benefit from higher education than their peers. And that makes me reflect on the huge waste of potential these current inequalities imply. Of that fifth of the young population with the poorest access to university, just 14,500 go to university each year – only around 6,000 more than a decade ago. But if they have the same intrinsic potential to go as others in the population, this means a further 40,000 each year are left out. If the next ten years are like the last, we will still be around 34,000 short. And the most troubling result in the report this year is that even that estimate might be optimistic. In the past two application cycles, there has been no improvement in our overall measure of relative equality at all. If this doesn't change, we will be no further forward in a decade's time than we are today.

Most would agree they want things to get better, and quickly. How to do it is more difficult. Our own research has demonstrated that almost all of these differences can be tied back to levels of attainment, and that the admissions process itself is 'fair' in that it gives similar outcomes to people with similar grades, regardless of their background.

But my view is that these differences are now so wide, and the waste of potential they imply so great, that a new approach and determination is needed. The most important of these is to follow and act on what the data and evidence tell us. Too much of the differences that exist today have been driven by groups that have been

left behind, as entry rates have increased, and are seemingly overlooked by outreach activities.

A good example is the difference between men and women. We report that this has reached record levels this year, with 36.8 per cent of UK young women entering higher education compared to 27.2 per cent of men, a record gap of 9.6 percentage points. Three quarters of the lowest entry rate fifth of the population is male. I've encountered many arguments as to why this doesn't merit concerted action, but remain unconvinced. For example, it isn't true that men are over-represented at top universities. Women are now 32 per cent more likely than men to enter higher tariff universities, up from 28 per cent just a year ago.

Perhaps the most common argument is that the gap between men and women is small compared to that between rich and poor. This was arguably true ten or fifteen years ago, but not today. Our analysis demonstrates that, once population shares are adjusted for, the difference between men and women is now more or less the same as the difference between rich and poor. So if you are concerned about differences by income background, you should be concerned about sex too. Once we use data to target our attention to those groups where there is the greatest return on reducing differences, we will begin to see inequality fall.

It remains my view that these worrying inequalities cannot be tackled by the higher education community on its own. It is clear that improvements in GCSE attainment are the biggest drivers of better access to higher education, and driving up GCSE attainment in key groups that are under-represented in HE means intervening at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, where the foundations for later achievement are built. Working with primary and secondary educators and the many charities and social enterprises that support children who are struggling with early education, is surely the way forward for the higher education sector to make a step change in access. This suggests a major collaborative initiative across multiple phases of education, implying a decade or more before we start seeing significant results. But with the new story told by the data in this report, I believe it is one that should start now.

Mary Curnock Cook

Chief Executive

Notes to the report

Population estimates

The population estimates used for the entry rates in this report are based on the most recent mid-year estimates and national population projections published by the Office for National Statistics, which have been revised following the 2011 census. These are updated from the population estimates used for similar reporting in previous years. The revised population estimates are higher for the young age group, resulting in lower entry rates. The key elements of the trends in entry rates as previously reported are generally unaltered by the new estimates.

Scotland

UCAS covers the overwhelming majority of full-time undergraduate provision for people living in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, so the statistics on acceptances or entry rates can be taken as being very close to all recruitment to full-time undergraduate higher education. In Scotland, there is a substantial section of higher education provision that is not included in UCAS' figures. This is mostly full-time higher education provided in further education colleges, which represents around one third of young full-time undergraduate study in Scotland, and this proportion varies by geography and background within Scotland. Accordingly, figures on entry rates or total recruitment in Scotland reflect only the part of full-time undergraduate study that uses UCAS.

In 2014, there were fewer very late acceptances than in other cycles recorded in the UCAS data for some Scottish providers. These changes may mean that the number of applicants and acceptances to Scottish UCAS providers in 2014 recorded through UCAS could be understated by up to 2,000, compared to how applicants and acceptances have been reported in recent cycles. This means that comparing 2014 applicants and acceptances for Scottish providers (or those from Scotland) to other cycles may not give an accurate measure of change.

In 2015, around 120 courses at Scottish providers which were previously part of the UCAS Teacher Training scheme, moved into the UCAS Undergraduate scheme. As such, the number of applicants and acceptances to Scottish providers in 2015 recorded through UCAS will include those which were previously part of UCAS Teacher Training, meaning that comparing 2015 applicants and acceptances for Scottish providers (or those from Scotland, particularly those aged 21 or over) to previous cycles may not give a like-for-like measure of change.

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Section 1

Key findings

Applicants, acceptances, and admission routes

Applicant numbers unchanged in 2016, but higher acceptance rates mean a record 535,200 are placed in higher education through UCAS, up by half a per cent

There were 718,400 applicants in 2016, almost the same (100 fewer) than in 2015.

In the 2016 cycle, 535,200 applicants were placed in higher education through UCAS ('acceptances'). There were 2,900 more applicants placed in 2016 than in 2015, an increase of 0.5 per cent.

The increase in acceptances in 2016 is a result of an increase in the proportion of applicants who are placed (the 'acceptance rate'). This increased by 0.4 percentage points in 2016 to 74.5 per cent.

Applicants placed at their firm 'first' choice continue to increase

The majority of applicants are placed at the offer they set as their firm choice. In 2016, 386,300 applicants were placed at their firm choice, an increase of 2,200 (0.6 per cent) from 2015, and the highest number ever placed by UCAS through this route.

After increasing over recent cycles, the number of applicants placed through their insurance choice remained constant in 2016, at 39,500.

Applicants placed through Clearing increase to highest number on record

In 2016, 64,900 applicants were placed through Clearing. This is an increase of 500 (0.8 per cent) on the 2015 cycle, and the highest number ever placed through this route.

There are two ways applicants can use Clearing. Main scheme applicants who were placed through the Clearing process increased by 900 (1.8 per cent) to 50,000. This is the highest number of main scheme applicants placed through this route.

Applicants who apply later and are accepted directly through the Clearing process decreased by 400 (2.4 per cent) to 14,900.

Country and age

More applicants from the UK placed than ever before. Increases from 18 and 19 year olds offset falls from older students to take total to record 465,500

Acceptances from the UK increased to 465,500 in 2016, an increase of 0.4 per cent (1,800 acceptances), a smaller increase than has been typical in recent cycles. The increase in acceptances resulted from an increase in the acceptance rate. Applicants from the UK fell by 0.3 per cent, the first fall in UK applicants since 2012.

All the increase in UK acceptances came from increases in 18 and 19 year olds. The number of 18 year olds accepted in 2016 increased by 1.5 per cent (3,600 acceptances) to 238,900, the highest number ever placed. The number of 19 year old acceptances increased by 0.5 per cent (500 acceptances) to 92,200, also the highest number ever placed from this age group.

Acceptances for older age groups decreased in 2016. The number of students placed aged between 21 to 25 fell by 2.9 per cent (1,600 acceptances) to 52,000. In total, acceptances for those aged 20 and over fell by 1.7 per cent (2,300 acceptances).

Acceptances from Scotland and Northern Ireland increase to record levels

There were 394,300 acceptances from England in 2016, unchanged from 2015, and the first time since 2012 that acceptances from England did not increase.

Applicants placed from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales all increased in 2016. There were 14,800 applicants placed from Northern Ireland, an increase of 5.3 per cent (700 acceptances) to the highest number recorded.

Not all HE students from Scotland are placed through UCAS – those who are totalled 35,700 in 2016, an increase of 2.6 per cent (900 acceptances) and the highest number recorded through UCAS.

There were 20,700 applicants placed from Wales, an increase of 1.0 per cent (200 acceptances) over 2015.

Acceptances from the EU increase by 7.0 per cent to 31,400 in 2016, the highest on record

In 2016, acceptances from the EU increased by 2,000 (7.0 per cent) to 31,400, a similar rate of increase as in recent years. This higher number of EU acceptances is due to an increase in the number of EU applicants (5.6 per cent to 53,600), and an increase in the proportion of those applicants being placed (the acceptance rate increased by 0.7 percentage points to 58.5 per cent, the highest level since 2009).

There are wide variations across Europe in both the numbers of acceptances and the change in 2016. Of countries recording a larger number of acceptances, there were above average increases from Poland (+27 per cent), Germany (+21 per cent), Spain (+18 per cent), and Bulgaria (+9 per cent). There were over 1,000 acceptances from each of these countries in 2016.

Over the last ten years, the strongest growth in acceptances from the EU has come from countries with lower levels of GDP per capita. Since 2006, the number of acceptances from these countries has tripled to reach 8,900 in 2016. Acceptances from EU countries with higher, medium, and lower levels of GDP per capita all increased in 2016 at a similar rate as in recent years.

Acceptances from outside the EU fall for the first time since 2011, by 2.3 per cent to 38,300

In 2016, the number of acceptances from non-EU countries fell by 2.3 per cent (900 acceptances) to 38,300. This is the first time acceptances from non-EU countries have fallen since 2011.

This fall in numbers was the result of both a decrease in the number of applicants, which decreased by 1.9 per cent (1,500 applicants) to 74,300 in 2016, and a decrease in the acceptance rate, which fell by 0.2 percentage points to 51.6 per cent, the lowest recorded value. The acceptance rate of non-EU applicants is relatively low compared to the acceptance rates for EU and UK applicants.

Increases in total acceptances to providers in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales increase by 2 to 3 per cent. English providers have similar recruitment as last year

Acceptances to English providers were similar to last year, increasing by 0.1 per cent (500 acceptances) to 450,500.

Not all HE providers in Scotland recruit through UCAS. Providers in Scotland who recruit through UCAS increased their acceptances by 3.2 per cent (1,500 acceptances) in 2016 to 47,900, the highest on record.

Welsh providers had 26,300 acceptances (+2.3 per cent, +600 acceptances), and providers in Northern Ireland had 10,400 acceptances (+2.8 per cent, +300 acceptances).

Entry rates for young people

The number of UK 18 year olds placed by UCAS is a product of both the size of the population and the proportion of 18 year olds in the population who are placed (the 'entry rate'). For the 2016 cycle, the number of 18 year olds (aligned to school cohorts) was estimated to have decreased by 2.1 per cent in England, 1.5 per cent in Northern Ireland, 2.2 per cent in Scotland, and 3.6 per cent in Wales.

Entry rates report the proportion of the population that enters higher education, and by taking changes in population size into account, give a better indication than overall numbers of the trends in the chances of entering higher education.

Strong increases in 18 year old entry rates across the UK. Young people in England, Scotland, and Wales more likely to enter higher education than ever before

The proportion of the English 18 year old population who entered higher education through UCAS increased by 1.2 percentage points to 32.5 per cent, the highest recorded entry rate for England. This increase means young people were 4 per cent more likely to enter higher education than in 2015, and 31 per cent more likely to enter than in 2006. Entry rates for England have increased every year since 2012.

Entry rates for 18 year olds living in Northern Ireland are higher than elsewhere in the UK at 34.8 per cent. In 2016, the entry rate increased by 1.4 percentage points (4 per cent proportionally), reversing the fall in entry rate in 2015.

In Scotland, entry rates for 18 year olds recorded through UCAS are lower than for other countries, but not all higher education provision in colleges in Scotland is recruited for through UCAS. In 2016, the entry rate was 25.3 per cent, an increase of 0.8 percentage points (3 per cent proportionally) and the highest on record.

In Wales, 29.5 per cent of 18 year olds were placed through UCAS into higher education in 2016, an increase of 1.3 percentage points (4 per cent proportionally). This is the highest entry rate recorded for Wales, and is the fifth consecutive cycle in which entry rates have increased.

In England, 43 per cent of the young population enter higher education by age 19, the highest ever level, but first time 19 year old entry rates in England decrease

In England, 11.1 per cent of 19 year olds in the population were placed in higher education through UCAS for the first time in 2016. This is 0.4 percentage points lower than in 2015, and is the first time (with the exception of 2012 when higher tuition fees were introduced) that the proportion has fallen.

This fall is from the same cohort of young people whose entry at age 18 in 2015 increased by 0.9 percentage points to 31.3 per cent. This increase in the entry rate at age 18 last year meant that, despite the fall in first time entry aged 19 this year, the proportion of the cohort that entered higher education by age 19 still increased, by 0.5 percentage points. Although this was a smaller increase in the rate compared to the last two cycles, the entry rate by age 19 was the highest on record at 42.5 per cent.

The proportion of young people who enter higher education by the time they are age 19 also increased in Wales by 1.3 percentage points to 37.5 per cent, the highest ever recorded in Wales. In Northern Ireland, the entry rate by age 19 also increased by 0.2 percentage points to 43.1 per cent.

Not all young people in Scotland enter higher education through UCAS. The proportion of the young population who are recorded as entering by age 19 increased by 1.2 percentage points in 2016, to 31.8 per cent. This is the largest annual increase recorded for Scottish young people since 2009, and takes the entry rate to its highest measured value.

Differences in young entry rates to higher education between groups

Combining different background characteristics into a single measure gives fullest measure of differences in entry rates for England

The UCAS Undergraduate 2015 End of Cycle Report demonstrated that entry rates for 18 year olds differed substantially, not just across characteristics such as income background or ethnic group, but also the intersections of these different characteristics. The fullest picture of differences in entry to higher education is given by considering a range of equality characteristics simultaneously through statistical methods. An expanded multiple equality dimension measure, considering area and income background, school sector, sex, and ethnic group combined, is used to report on levels and trends of differences in entry to higher education.

For the fifth of the English population with the lowest entry rates, 13.6 per cent entered higher education in 2016, an increase of 0.1 percentage points

The multiple equality measure (MEM) group 1 contains those groups in the young English population that have the lowest entry rates in higher education across a combination of population characteristics. The young population the statistical methods identify as being in this group are predominantly men and attended schools in the state sector, where they were recorded as being in the White ethnic group, coming from a low income family, and living in a neighbourhood with lower HE entry rates.

The entry rate to higher education for MEM group 1 in 2016 was 13.6 per cent. This is an increase of 0.1 percentage points from last year, making young people in this group around 1 per cent more likely to enter higher education.

The entry rate of young people in this group has increased every year, from 7.8 per cent in 2006 to 13.6 per cent in 2016, an increase of 5.8 percentage points, meaning they were 74 per cent more likely to enter in 2016 than a decade previously.

The annual increase in the entry rate in 2015 and 2016 has been lower than the recent trend. In 2015, this was related to lower rates of increase from men and the White ethnic group, and in 2016, it is related to lower rates of increase from young people from lower income backgrounds.

For the fifth of the English population with the highest entry rates, 52.1 per cent entered higher education in 2016, an increase of 1.2 percentage points

The multiple equality measure (MEM) group 5 contains those groups in the young English population that have the highest entry rates in higher education across a combination of population characteristics. The young people in this group are typically women, attended an independent school or were at a state school, and are living in a high entry rate neighbourhood, not from a lower income background, and were in the Asian and Chinese ethnic groups.

The entry rate to higher education for group 5 in 2016 was 52.1 per cent. This is an increase of 1.2 percentage points from last year, making young people in this group around 2 per cent more likely to enter higher education.

The entry rate for this group is 5.1 percentage points higher than in 2006 (47.0 per cent) meaning they have become 11 per cent more likely to enter higher education over this period. The annual increase in the entry rate in 2015 and 2016 was higher than the recent trend. In 2015, this was related to higher rates of increase from women and the Asian ethnic group. In 2016, it is related to higher rates of increase from women from the White ethnic group and from areas with higher HE entry rates, and the Asian ethnic group.

No material change in the overall equality of entry to higher education in England

One way to summarise the differences in entry rates across the multiple equality dimensions is to track the difference between groups one and five, those with the lowest and highest entry rates. As the overall entry rate to higher education has been increasing over the past decade, using the ratio of the entry rates between these groups can be helpful, and directly measures how much more likely group 5 is to enter HE than group 1.

In 2006, young people in group 5 were 6.0 times more likely to enter than those in group 1. This ratio then declined to 3.8 times by 2014. Since then, the ratio has not decreased further. This means that over the past couple of years, there has been no material change in the overall relative equality of entering higher education.

Entry rates to higher tariff providers show a ten-fold difference between the highest and lowest entering fifths of the English population

The multiple equality measures identify those groups with the highest and lowest entry rates to higher education overall. The same groups can also be used to look at how entry rates to different types of providers, grouped by the typical strength of qualifications held by their students, vary across these groups.

For 18 year olds in England, the entry rates to higher tariff providers (those universities and colleges with, on average, the highest qualification levels of acceptances) show greater differences across backgrounds than the entry rates to other types of provider.

In 2016, entry rates to these providers range from 2.3 per cent for applicants in the multiple equality measure group 1, to 24.5 per cent for the applicants in multiple equality measure group 5.

The entry rate for group 1 has increased from 2.2 per cent in 2015 to 2.3 per cent in 2016, an increase of 0.1 percentage points, meaning these young people have become 5 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff providers in 2016. Since 2006,

the entry rate for group 1 has increased by 57 per cent proportionally, from 1.4 per cent to 2.3 per cent.

The entry rate to higher tariff providers for young people in group 5 – those combinations of characteristics that have the highest entry rates – was 24.5 per cent in 2016, an increase of 0.2 percentage points (1 per cent proportionally).

The increases in the entry rates of both group 1 and five take each group to its highest recorded level. Young people in group 5 were 10.8 times more likely to enter higher tariff providers than young people in group 1. This is a reduction in the ratio from the 2015 cycle (11.2) and substantially less than in 2006 (16.2).

Difference in entry rates to other types of providers are lower. Entry rates to medium tariff providers in 2016 ranged from 4.4 per cent for group 1, to 15.2 per cent for group 5, a ratio of 3.5. For lower tariff providers, entry rates by background are in a comparatively narrow range between 6.9 per cent (group 1) and 13.9 per cent (group 4).

Entry rates for lower income young people in England increase to record level, but rate of increase slows and the difference to other young people increases

One of the characteristics included in the multiple equality measure for England is whether young people come from a lower income background, measured by whether they were previously in a state school in England and received free school meals.

Young people in this group became 1.6 per cent more likely to enter higher education in 2016, with their entry rate increasing by 0.3 percentage points to 16.1 per cent. This group of young people is almost 80 per cent more likely to enter higher education than they were in 2006, but the increase in the entry rate in 2016 is less than recent cycles, which have typically seen proportional increases of 7 per cent each year. Most lower income pupils enter a lower tariff group provider. In 2016, the entry rate of these young people to lower tariff providers decreased.

The entry rate for young people who attended state schools but did not previously receive free school meals was 32.8 per cent, an increase of 1.4 percentage points, five times larger than the increase for lower income young people.

These differential entry rate growth rates mean the difference between lower income and other state school children increased in 2016, both proportionally and in absolute percentage point terms. The percentage point difference in 2016 was 16.7 percentage points, the highest level recorded.

The entry rate for the White ethnic group increases but remains lower than for other ethnic groups

One of the characteristics included in the multiple equality measure for England is the ethnic group of young people who are in state schools.

The entry rate for English 18 year olds from state schools increased for all ethnic groups in 2016.

The entry rates for pupils from most ethnic groups lie in a range from 28.7 per cent (White ethnic group) to 42.9 per cent (Asian ethnic group). The entry rate for pupils in the Chinese ethnic group is higher at 57.9 per cent.

The largest increases in entry rates in 2015 were for pupils in the Asian group (+1.9 percentage points to 42.9 per cent) and the Mixed ethnic group (+1.2 percentage points to 33.0 per cent).

For the ninth consecutive year, the White ethnic group had the lowest entry rate of any ethnic group, standing at 28.7 per cent in 2016. The gap in entry rates between the White ethnic group and the Mixed ethnic group, the ethnic group with the second lowest entry rate, widened to 4.3 percentage points.

Difference in entry rates between women and men at record levels, as women become 32 per cent more likely than men to enter higher tariff providers

The entry rate for 18 year old women in the UK was 36.8 per cent, 9.6 percentage points higher than for men (27.2 per cent), the largest points difference recorded. Young women are 35 per cent (proportionally) more likely to enter than men in 2016.

The difference in 18 year old entry rates between men and women equates to 37,000 fewer 18 year old men entering higher education this year than would be the case if men had the same entry rate as women.

The difference in entry rates between men and women widens by a further 1.5 percentage points when entry at ages 18 and 19 are considered together.

Young women are more likely to enter all types of higher education provider than young men. Young women have become increasingly more likely relative to men to enter higher tariff providers. In 2006, they were 18 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff providers than men, and were 32 per cent more likely than men to enter higher tariff providers in 2016.

In England, it is possible to compare the entry rate differences between men and women to differences between equivalently sized population groups formed on an income-based measure. In 2006, the entry rate differences between men and women were around half the size of the differences between equivalently sized income-based groups of young people. Since 2006, the differences between men

and women have increased, while the differences between income-based groups have reduced. In 2016, the differences between men and women are around 90 per cent of the size of the difference between income-based groups.

Entry rates increase in all regions of England, but large differences persist

The proportion of the 18 year old population that enters higher education varies across the different regions of England. In 2016, the lowest entry rates were in the South West (28.2 per cent) and the North East (28.9 per cent). The highest entry rate was for 18 year olds living in London, where 39.9 per cent entered higher education in 2016. Young people in London were 38 per cent more likely to enter higher education than those living in the South West and North East in 2016.

Entry rates increased in all English regions in 2016. The North East, East Midlands, East of England, and South East had proportional increases of 4 per cent or greater, larger than the proportional increase for England as a whole. The South West, which has the lowest entry rate in 2015, had the smallest increase of any region in 2016 – 2 per cent proportionally – widening the difference between the South West and other regions.

Parliamentary constituencies where one in five or fewer enters higher education have fallen in number by almost 90 per cent since 2006

The 650 parliamentary constituencies in the UK show a finer grain geography of 18 year old entry rates across the UK, though their relatively small size means their entry rates can vary by a few percentage points from year to year through random fluctuations alone.

Parliamentary constituencies show a wider range of entry rates than regions. Most constituencies (around 80 per cent) have entry rates between 20 and 40 per cent. However, 22 constituencies have entry rates of lower than 20 per cent, and 40 constituencies have entry rates of 45 per cent or higher.

Many parliamentary constituencies show large increases in entry rates over the past decade, with young people becoming over 50 per cent more likely to enter higher education in over 100 constituencies. In 2006, there were 186 constituencies where one in five or fewer entered higher education. By 2016, that number had fallen to 22 constituencies, a reduction of almost 90 per cent.

In Scotland, not all higher education provided in further education colleges recruits through UCAS, so UCAS' university entry rates for Scottish constituencies will be lower than the entry rate to all higher education.

Young people living in wards with low participation rates (POLAR) become more likely than ever to enter higher education in England and Wales

In England, the entry rate for 18 year olds living in wards with low participation (POLAR3 quintile 1) increased by 1.0 percentage point (5 per cent proportionally) to 19.5 per cent, the highest level recorded.

Entry rates for this group in England have increased every cycle since 2006, making POLAR3 quintile 1 young people in England 29 per cent more likely to enter university in 2016 than four years ago, and 73 per cent more likely to enter higher education than in 2006.

In Wales, the entry rate for this group increased by 1.6 percentage points (10 per cent proportionally) to 18.2 per cent, the highest on record, and in Northern Ireland, it increased by 0.2 percentage points (1 per cent proportionally) to 16.0 per cent, close to the highest recorded level.

Young people living in areas of higher deprivation in Scotland (SIMD quintile 1) are 12 per cent more likely to enter higher education through UCAS than last year

In Scotland, the entry rate for 18 year olds living in areas of higher deprivation (SIMD quintile 1) increased by 1.1 percentage points (12 per cent proportionally) to 10.9 per cent, the highest on record. Not all higher education in Scotland recruits students through UCAS.

Offer-making

Number of offers made by providers continues to grow, exceeding 1.9 million in 2016, but rate of growth is slowing

Providers made over 1.9 million offers to main scheme applicants in 2016, 24,000 (1.2 per cent) more than in 2015, and the fourth consecutive cycle that the number of offers has increased.

The growth in offer-making is slowing down. The increase in 2016 (24,000 offers) is only a third of the increase seen in 2015 (78,000 offers), and a quarter of the increase in 2014 (101,000 offers).

More main scheme applicants receive multiple offers, half have four or more, a third have five

In 2016, 94 per cent of main scheme applicants who made five choices received at least one offer, and 57 per cent of these applicants received four or five offers (1 percentage point higher than in 2015). The proportion having the maximum five offers increased to 33 per cent in 2016, the highest level recorded.

Applicants were 29 per cent more likely to have five offers in 2016 than in 2012, and 54 per cent more likely than in 2011.

Offer rates increase for all age groups, except those aged over 25

Offer rates to applications from 18 year olds increased to 76.1 per cent, and for applications from 19 year olds, the offer rate increased to 67.2 per cent. These are the highest offer rates to these age groups during the reporting period. There were also increases in offer rates to applicants aged between 20 and 25, but these remain below the levels typical in 2008 and 2009.

Offer rates to applicants aged over 25 fell slightly to 35.7 per cent, 0.2 percentage points lower than in 2015, but slightly higher than in 2014.

English providers increase offer rates to UK applicants

Offer rates from providers to applications from UK 18 year olds vary by provider country. Offer rates to UK applicants from English providers increased to 78.3 per cent (0.7 percentage points), offer rates from Welsh providers to UK applications remained unchanged at 84.4 per cent, and offer rates from Northern Irish providers fell by 0.8 percentage points to 83.1 per cent.

Offer rates from Scottish providers to UK applicants tend to be lower than offer rates from providers in other parts of the UK. In 2016, the offer rate from Scottish providers to UK applicants fell by 0.6 percentage points to 62.0 per cent. Offer rates from Scottish providers to Scottish applicants fell (by 2.6 per cent proportionally) to 59.6 per cent, while offer rates from Scottish providers to English and Northern Irish applicants increased. These changes mean that applicants from England and Northern Ireland are around 15 per cent more likely to receive an offer from a Scottish provider than applicants from Scotland.

Qualifications and provider groups

Entry rate for 18 year olds holding BTECs as their main qualification falls

In 2016, 3.5 per cent of UK 18 year olds were accepted into higher education holding BTECs as their main qualification. This is a slight fall, 1 per cent proportionally, compared to 2015, but set against a backdrop of steady increases since 2012.

Most UK 18 year olds who are accepted into higher education hold A levels as their main qualification. In 2016, 20.1 per cent of UK 18 year olds were accepted into higher education holding at least three A levels, up by 3 per cent on 2015.

A small proportion of UK 18 year olds are accepted into higher education holding a combination of A levels and BTECs. In 2016, this proportion was 2.5 per cent, 10 per cent higher than in 2015.

More applicants placed at higher and medium tariff providers, but the number placed at lower tariff providers falls

Providers can be grouped by the average qualification level of their acceptances. Acceptances to higher and medium tariff providers increased in 2016 to their highest number on record.

Acceptances to higher tariff providers increased by 4,000 (+2.8 per cent) to 149,400. Acceptances to medium tariff providers increased by 5,200 (+3.2 per cent) to 171,200, also the highest number on record.

Acceptances to lower tariff providers fell by 6,300 (-2.9 per cent) to 214,700. This is the first time acceptances to lower tariff providers have fallen since 2012, with acceptances in 2016 falling below the total for both 2015 and 2014 cycles.

Proportion of acceptances with higher grades at A level continues to fall at higher tariff providers

The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances that have achieved grades equivalent to ABB or above at A level can be used as a summary measure of the qualification strength of acceptances.

Higher tariff providers have the highest proportions of these acceptances. In 2016, 72.7 per cent of their acceptances held ABB or above from A levels. This is a decrease of 1.4 percentage points from the 74.1 per cent who held these qualifications in 2015, and a decrease of 12.7 percentage points from 85.4 per cent in 2011, when the proportion was at its highest. The reduction in this proportion in 2016 was less than the 0.3 percentage points typical in recent cycles.

At medium tariff providers, 15.5 per cent of English 18 year old acceptances held ABB or above at A level, a fall of 1.6 percentage points from 2015. Very few who are accepted to lower tariff providers – only 3.3 per cent in 2016 – hold these qualifications.

The proportion of English 18 year olds at higher tariff providers who held higher grades at BTEC increased in 2016, to 2.4 per cent (0.1 percentage points, 6 per cent proportionally). The proportion holding higher BTEC grades at medium and lower tariff providers fell. This is the first time the proportion has fallen for either of these provider types since in the period. Despite the falls, the proportions were the second highest on record, at 9.6 per cent for medium tariff providers, and 16.4 per cent for lower tariff providers.

Medium tariff providers recruit more lower grade A level students, while lower tariff providers recruit fewer

In 2016, there were an additional 5,200 applicants placed at medium tariff providers. Around 40 per cent of this increase was from an additional 2,200 English 18 year old

applicants who were accepted holding A levels with grades equivalent to BBC and below.

At lower tariff providers, 1,800 fewer English 18 year old applicants were accepted with A level grades of BBC and below. There were also 1,100 fewer English 18 year old applicants accepted holding BTECs equivalent to three A level grades. Combined, these account for almost half of the overall fall in acceptances to lower tariff providers in 2016.

There was no change in the number of English 18 year olds accepted to higher tariff providers with A levels in 2016.

Section 2

Analytical overview

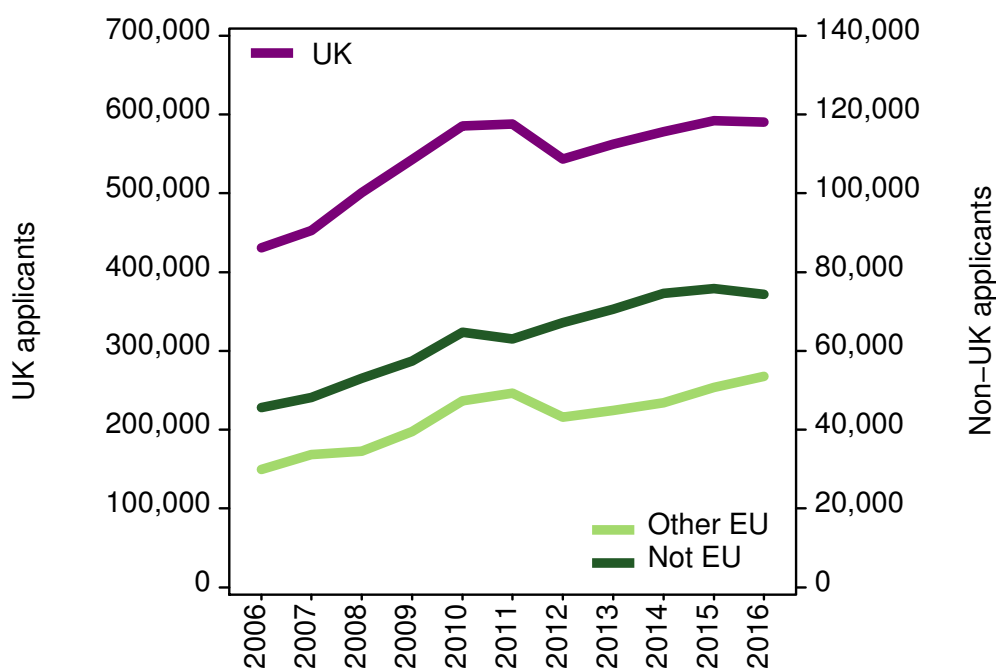
Applicants

Applicant numbers unchanged in 2016 but differing trends by domicile

There were 718,400 applicants in 2016, almost the same (100 fewer) than in 2015. This discontinues the recent trend of steadily increasing application numbers since 2012.

The large majority of applicants in each cycle are domiciled in the UK (590,500, 82 per cent of all applicants, in the 2016 cycle). There was a decrease of 1,500 (-0.3 per cent) UK domiciled applicants in 2016, but the number of applicants from the UK was still the second highest recorded. Applicants from the EU increased in 2016 by 2,900 (+5.6 per cent) to 53,600, the highest number of applicants recorded from this domicile in any cycle. Applicants from countries outside of the EU decreased in 2016 by 1,500 (-1.9 per cent) to 74,300, the first fall in five years, and a contrast to the annual increases typical since 2011.

Figure 1 Applicants by domicile group



Acceptances

There were 535,200 applicants accepted to start higher education in the 2016 cycle, 2,900 (+0.5 per cent) more than in the 2015 cycle. For the fourth year running, this is the highest number of acceptances recorded in any cycle, although the increase this year is smaller than the 3 to 7 per cent proportional increases seen each year since 2012.

UK domiciled acceptances increase to a record number in the 2016 cycle

Most acceptances are from the UK – in recent cycles, between 87 to 88 per cent of the total. In 2016, there were 465,500 acceptances from the UK, up 1,800 (+0.4 per cent), a smaller increase than last year, resulting in the highest number of acceptances of UK domiciled applicants from any cycle, although a smaller increase than from the 2014 cycle to the 2015 cycle.

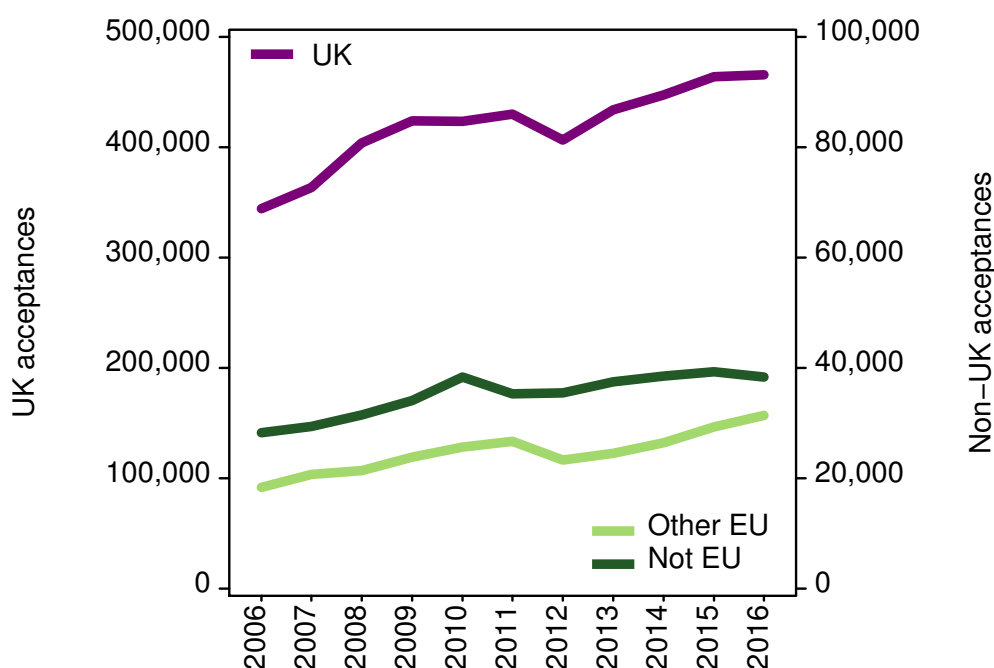
Acceptances from other countries in the EU increase 7 per cent in 2016

EU domiciled acceptances form around 5 to 6 per cent of all acceptances, and have increased in each cycle since 2006, apart from 2012. In 2016, acceptances from other countries in the EU increased by 2,000 (+7.0 per cent) to a record 31,400.

Acceptances from outside the EU decrease for the first time since 2011

Around 7 to 8 per cent of acceptances are from applicants outside the EU. In 2016, there were 38,300 acceptances from applicants outside the EU, down 900 (-2.3 per cent) from 2015 and similar to the number accepted in 2014.

Figure 2 Acceptances by domicile group



Acceptances from UK domiciled 18 and 19 year olds increase to record levels, but fall in older age groups

Around half of UK domiciled acceptances are from 18 year old applicants. In 2016, there were 238,900 acceptances from UK 18 year olds, +3,600 (+1.5 per cent) from 2015 and the highest total recorded.

Acceptances from 19 year old applicants are usually around a fifth of all UK domiciled acceptances. In 2016, the number of acceptances increased by 500 (+0.5 per cent) to 92,200, the highest recorded for 19 year old applicants.

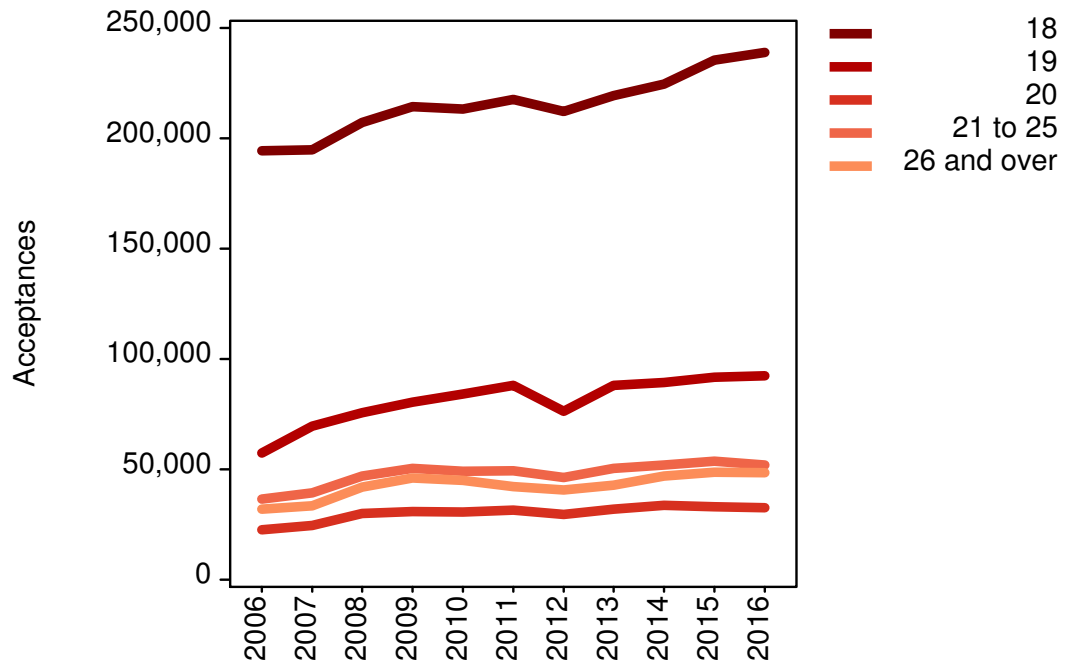
20 year old acceptances make up around 7 per cent of all UK domiciled acceptances. In 2016, acceptances from 20 year olds decreased by 500 (-1.5 per cent) to 32,500. This was the second consecutive year the number of 20 year old acceptances has decreased, but the number was still 600 (1.9 per cent) higher than the number in 2013.

A large set of teacher training courses at providers in Scotland were recruited for through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme for the first time in 2015, having previously been recruited for through UCAS Teacher Training. Acceptances to these courses tended to be aged 21 and over.

Around 11 per cent of all UK domiciled acceptances are from 21-25 year olds. In 2016, the number of 21-25 year old acceptances decreased by 1,600 (-2.9 per cent) to 52,000, the second highest number recorded.

Around 10 per cent of all UK domiciled acceptances are from applicants aged 26 or over. Following strong increases in the 2008 and 2009 cycles, the number of acceptances from this age group decreased between 2010 and 2012. This trend reversed again, with the number of acceptances increasing in each cycle up to 2015 when it reached 48,700, their highest recorded value. In 2016, there were 48,400 acceptances aged 26 and over, a reduction of 300 (-0.5 per cent) on the 2015 number.

Figure 3 UK acceptances by age group



Acceptances from England remain unchanged, but increase in the rest of the UK

Figure 4 shows acceptances by applicant country of domicile in the UK. Acceptances from England are shown against their own (left hand side) axis as numbers for this group are higher than those from other countries.

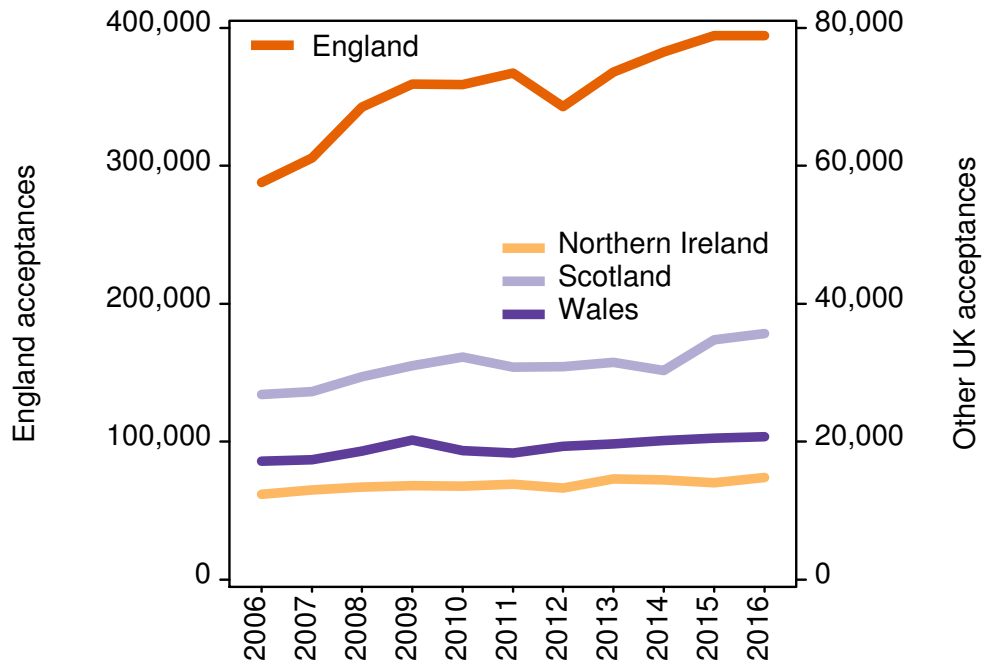
In most cycles since 2006, the number of acceptances from England has increased. In 2016, the number of acceptances was 394,300, which is slightly lower, by around 100, compared to 2015. This is only the third time since 2006 that the number of acceptances from England has not increased. However, the number in 2016 was 15 per cent higher than in 2012; the last time the number of acceptances from England decreased, and when tuition fees in England were increased.

Between 2014 and 2015, acceptances from Northern Ireland fell by 400 (-2.8 per cent) to 14,000. In 2016, the number of acceptances increased by 700 (+5.3 per cent), more than reversing the previous years' fall and reaching a new record high of 14,800.

In 2016, acceptances from Scotland increased by 900 (+2.6 per cent), resulting in a record total of 35,700. In 2014, there were fewer late acceptances to Scotland recorded in the UCAS data than is typical for some Scottish providers, meaning that comparing acceptances in 2014 with other cycles may not fully reflect trends in total recruitment in Scotland. Also, from 2015, a large set of teacher training courses at providers in Scotland were recruited for through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme, having previously been recruited for through UCAS Teacher Training. These two factors are estimated to account for around 3,600 of the 4,500 increase observed between 2014 and 2015.

Acceptances from Wales increased for the fifth consecutive cycle to 20,700, an increase of 200 (+1.0 per cent) and reaching a new high.

Figure 4 Acceptances by UK country of domicile



Acceptances to higher education providers in all UK countries increase, with largest increase for providers in Scotland

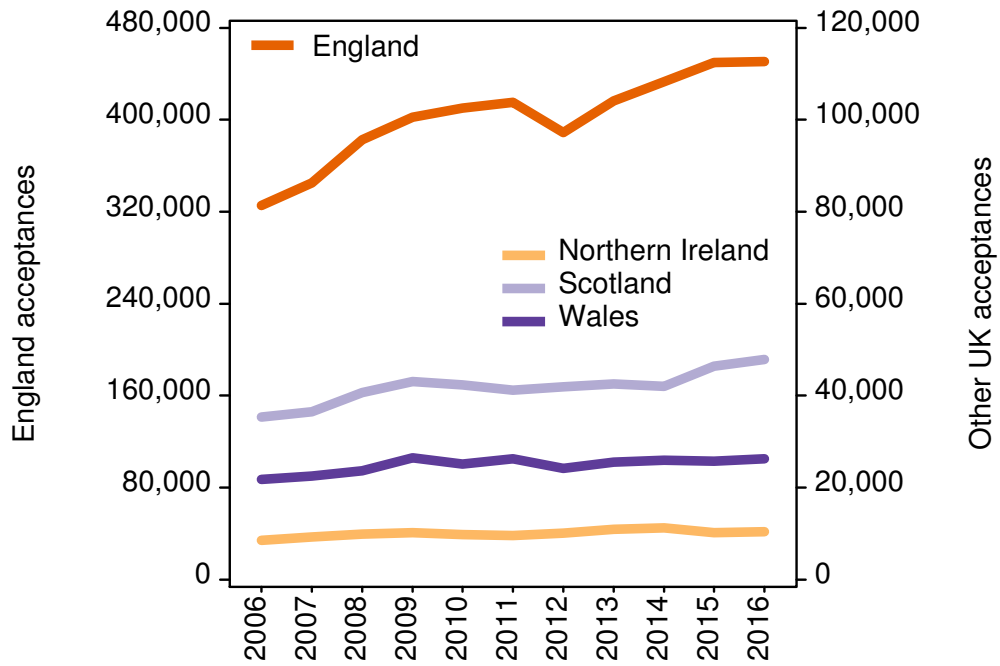
Figure 5 shows the number of acceptances by country of higher education provider. Since acceptances to providers in England are much higher than to any other country, they are shown on a separate axis (left hand side). Most of the increase in acceptances over the period has been to English providers. Between the 2006 cycle and the 2011 cycle, the number of acceptances to English providers increased by more than a quarter to 415,100. Following a fall in the 2012 cycle, acceptances at English providers have increased in each cycle. In 2016, the number of acceptances to providers in England increased slightly to 450,500 (+500, +0.1 per cent).

Higher education providers in Northern Ireland had 10,400 acceptances in 2016, an increase of +300 (+2.8 per cent) on the 2015 cycle, but not enough to offset the -9.7 per cent fall in acceptances in 2015.

Acceptances to higher education providers in Scotland increased to a new recorded high of 47,900 (+1,500, +3.2 per cent). In 2014, there were fewer late acceptances to Scotland recorded in the UCAS data than is typical for some Scottish providers, meaning that comparing acceptances in 2014 with other cycles may not fully reflect trends in total recruitment in Scotland. Also, a large set of teacher training courses at providers in Scotland were recruited for through the UCAS Undergraduate scheme for the first time in 2015, having previously been recruited for through UCAS Teacher Training. These two factors are estimated to account for around 3,800 of the 4,400 increase in acceptances to providers in Scotland in 2015, compared with 2014.

Acceptances to higher education providers in Wales increased to 26,300 (+600, +2.3 per cent), the highest number since 2009.

Figure 5 Acceptances by provider country



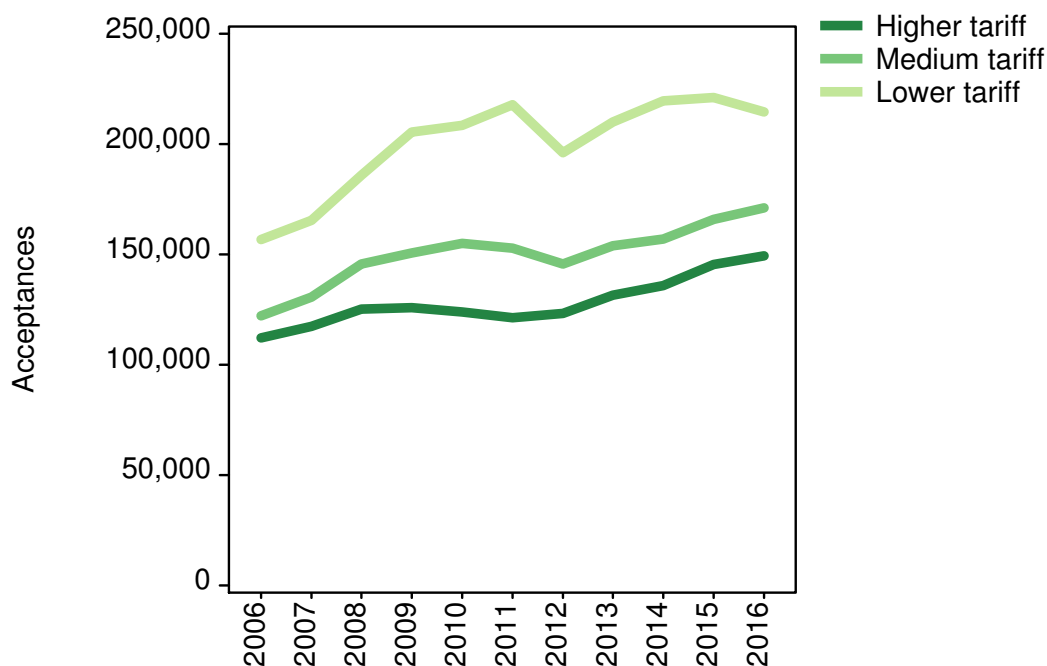
Acceptances continue to increase at higher and medium tariff providers, but lower tariff providers experience first fall since 2012

Higher education providers across the UK can be grouped based on the average levels of attainment (summarised through UCAS Tariff points) of a common group of accepted applicants. Figure 6 shows the number of all acceptances by cycle for these provider tariff groups.

In recent cycles, acceptances increased for each of the provider tariff groups, resulting in record levels of acceptances for each group in the 2015 cycle. In 2016, the numbers of acceptances for higher and medium tariff providers continued to increase. Acceptances to higher tariff providers increased to 149,400 (+4,000, +2.8 per cent), while acceptances to medium tariff providers increased to 171,200 (+5,200, +3.2 per cent), the highest number of acceptances recorded for both groups.

Acceptances to lower tariff providers fell in 2016, for the first time since 2012. In 2016, there were 214,700 acceptances to lower tariff providers (-6,300, -2.9 per cent), fewer than the number of acceptances in 2014 but 2.2 per cent more than in 2013.

Figure 6 Acceptances by provider tariff group



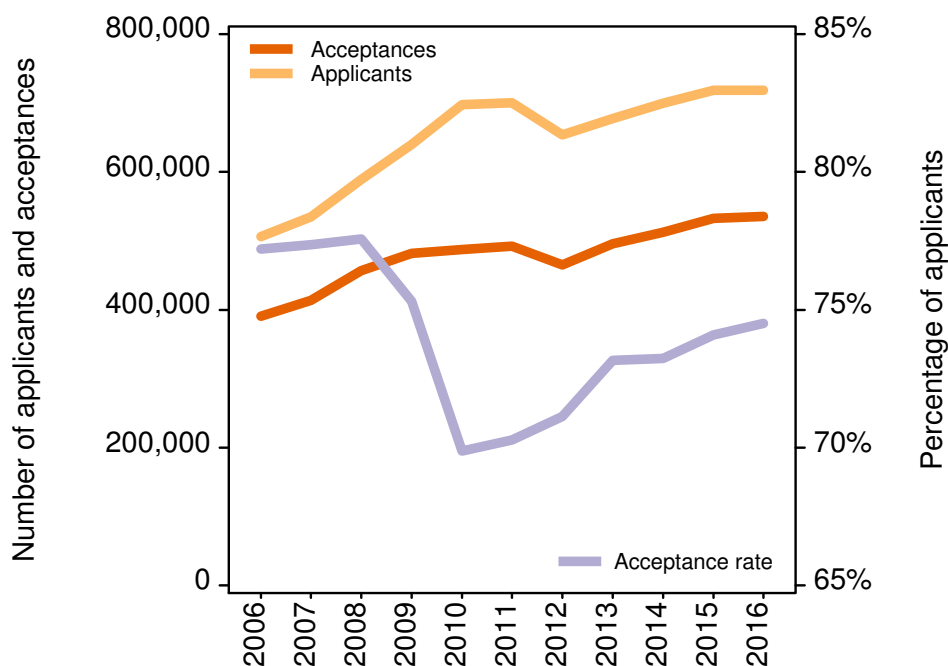
Acceptance rates

The proportion of applicants who have a place at the end of the cycle is termed the acceptance rate, and reflects the relationship between total applicants and total acceptances. Since the number of acceptances may be subject to number control or physical constraints, it can be broadly interpreted as the 'difficulty' of gaining admission to higher education in a particular year. However, becoming accepted requires both a higher education provider to make an offer to the applicant, and the applicant to accept and meet the conditions of the provider's offer. Therefore, changes in the acceptance rate can also reflect differences in applicant choices, or preference to enter higher education.

Acceptance rate increased in 2016, as acceptances increased at a greater rate than number of applicants

The acceptance rate for all applicants in 2016 increased to 74.5 per cent (+0.4 percentage points). This increase between cycles in the acceptance rate is a result of an increase in acceptances, while the number of applicants remained largely unchanged from the previous cycle. Despite this increase, the acceptance rate has still not returned to the level seen between the 2006 and 2008 cycles (of between 77 and 78 per cent). The proportion of acceptances from outside the UK has increased in recent years. This, in combination with lower acceptance rates for non-UK applicants, means it is unlikely the overall acceptance rate will increase to values seen in 2008 and earlier.

Figure 7 Applicants, acceptances, and the acceptance rate

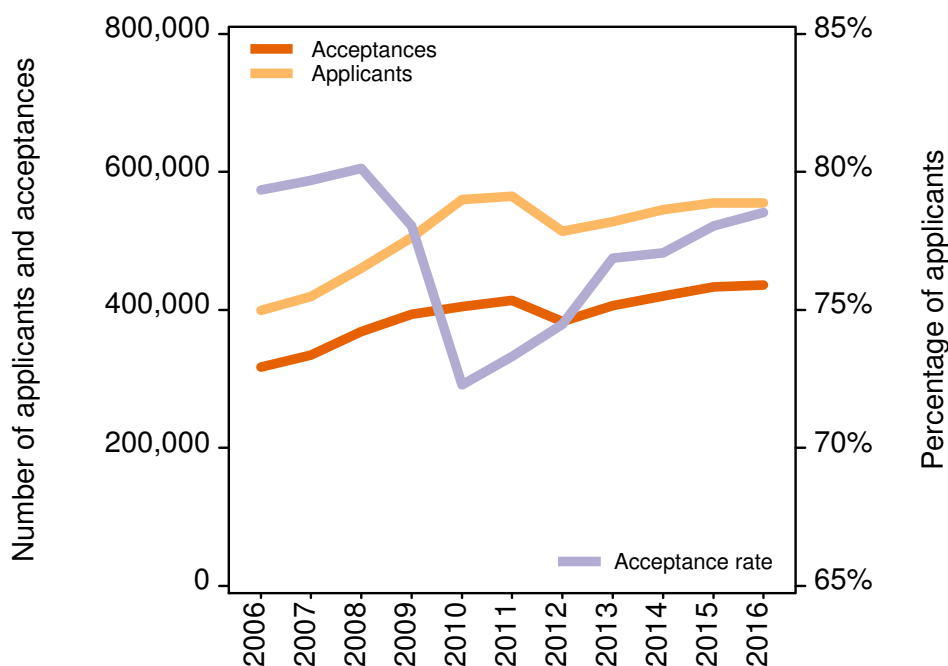


Acceptance rate for UK main scheme applicants at highest since 2009

UK main scheme applicants are the largest group of applicants, typically 78 to 80 per cent of the total. Main scheme applicants are able to make up to five initial course choices, followed by the opportunity to use other routes later in the cycle. The acceptance rates of this group best reflect the 'difficulty' of gaining admission to higher education in a particular year.

The acceptance rate for UK main scheme applicants decreased by almost 6 percentage points in 2010, due to a continuing trend in the increase of applicants which was not matched by the increase in the number of acceptances. Between 2011 and 2015, the acceptance rate increased each year. In 2016, the acceptance rate increased again to 78.5 per cent (+0.5 per cent) and remains between 1 and 2 percentage points lower than it was in 2007 and 2008.

Figure 8 Applicants, acceptances, and the acceptance rate for UK main scheme applicants only



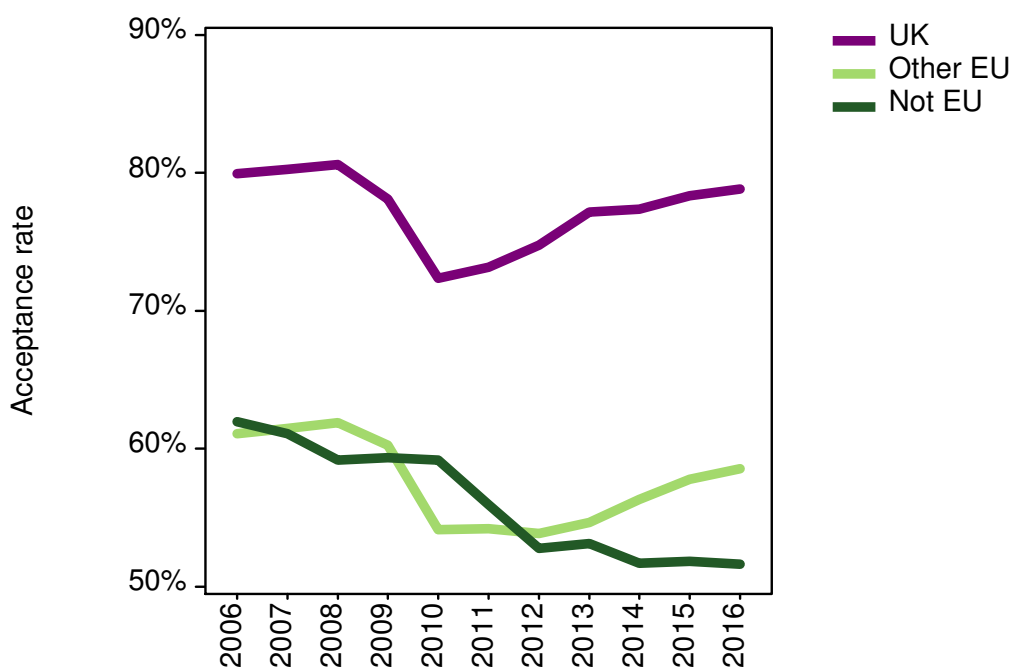
Acceptance rates continue to increase for UK and EU students, while acceptance rates for students from outside of the EU fall

A higher proportion of UK domiciled applicants are accepted than applicants from outside the UK. The acceptance rate for UK domiciled applicants increased to 78.8 per cent (+0.5 percentage points) in 2016. Acceptance rates for this group remained below the 80 to 81 per cent values typical between 2006 and 2008.

The acceptance rate for EU applicants in 2016 was 58.5 per cent, an increase of 0.7 percentage points and reaching the highest rate since the large decrease in 2010. Before 2010, the acceptance rate for EU applicants was typically 60 to 62 per cent.

The acceptance rate for applicants from outside the EU fell by 0.2 percentage points in 2016, to 51.6 per cent, the lowest value recorded. This means that non-EU applicants remain around 15 per cent less likely to be placed in 2016 than was typical in the 2006 to 2010 cycles.

Figure 9 Acceptance rates by applicant domicile group



Acceptance rates increase for UK 18 to 25 year olds

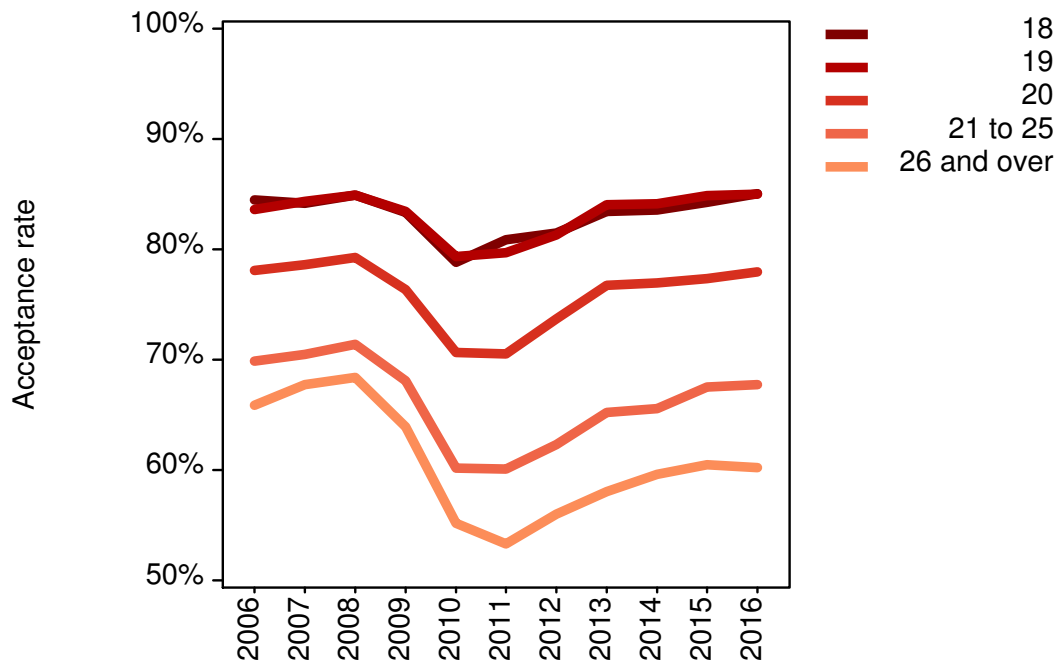
In each cycle, the acceptance rate for UK 18 year olds is at a very similar level to the acceptance rate for 19 year olds. In 2016, the acceptance rate was 85.0 per cent for 18 year olds (+0.8 percentage points) and also 85.0 per cent for 19 year olds (+0.1 percentage points), a record high for both age groups.

The acceptance rates for older age groups are consistently lower. For 20 year olds, the acceptance rate increased in 2016 to 78.0 per cent (+0.6 percentage points), almost reaching the highest recorded acceptance rate of 79 per cent in 2007 and 2008.

For those aged 21 to 25 years old, the acceptance rate increased to 67.7 per cent (+0.2 percentage points), but remained lower than the acceptance rates typical before 2009 (70 to 71 per cent).

Applicants aged 26 and over were the only age group to show a decrease in acceptance rate in 2016, falling by 0.3 percentage points to 60.2 per cent, and remaining much lower than the acceptance rate that was typical before 2009 (66 to 68 per cent). The proportion of applicants aged 26 and over who applied for nursing courses, which have relatively low acceptance rates, increased in 2016.

Figure 10 Acceptance rates for UK domiciled applicants by age group



Acceptance rates for 18 year olds increase for all UK domiciles, and reach new highs in England and Wales

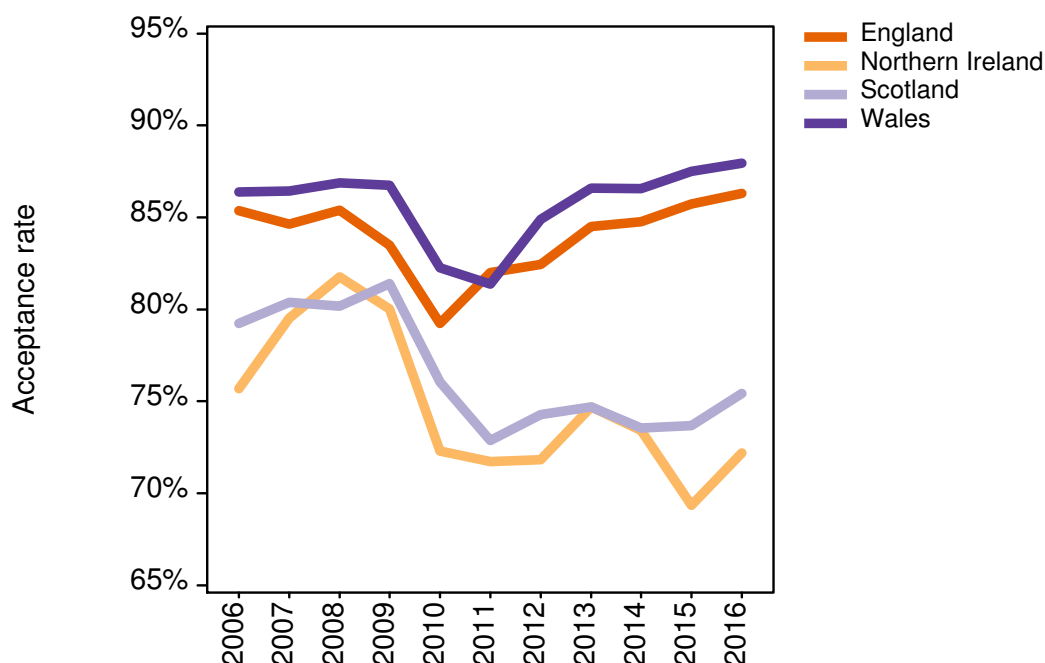
Acceptance rates vary by age and country of domicile, and the typical age composition of applicants also varies by country. Figure 11 shows the trend in acceptance rates for 18 year old applicants (the largest single applicant age group in each country) by UK country of domicile. Acceptance rates have been higher for applicants from England and Wales compared to Scotland and Northern Ireland in all cycles, and particularly since 2011.

The acceptance rates for English and Welsh domiciled applicants in 2016 were 86.3 per cent (+0.6 percentage points) and 88.0 per cent (+0.5 percentage points) respectively, representing new record levels for both of these countries.

In 2016, the acceptance rate for 18 year old applicants from Scotland increased to 75.4 per cent (+ 1.8 percentage points, the largest increase on record) and the highest acceptance rate for this group since 2010.

Acceptance rates for applicants from Northern Ireland had the biggest increase of any domicile group in 2016, increasing by 2.8 percentage points to 72.2 per cent. This increase takes the acceptance rate back to the values seen between 2010 and 2012, but does not fully reverse the large fall in acceptance rate seen in 2015.

Figure 11 Acceptance rates for 18 year olds by UK country of domicile



Entry rates for 18 and 19 year olds from the UK

18 year olds in England, Scotland, and Wales were more likely to enter higher education in the 2016 cycle than any previous year

The entry rate is the proportion of the population accepted into higher education through UCAS. The entry rate refers to the cycle in which the applicant is accepted and includes both acceptances for immediate entry to higher education and those that are deferred until the next academic year.

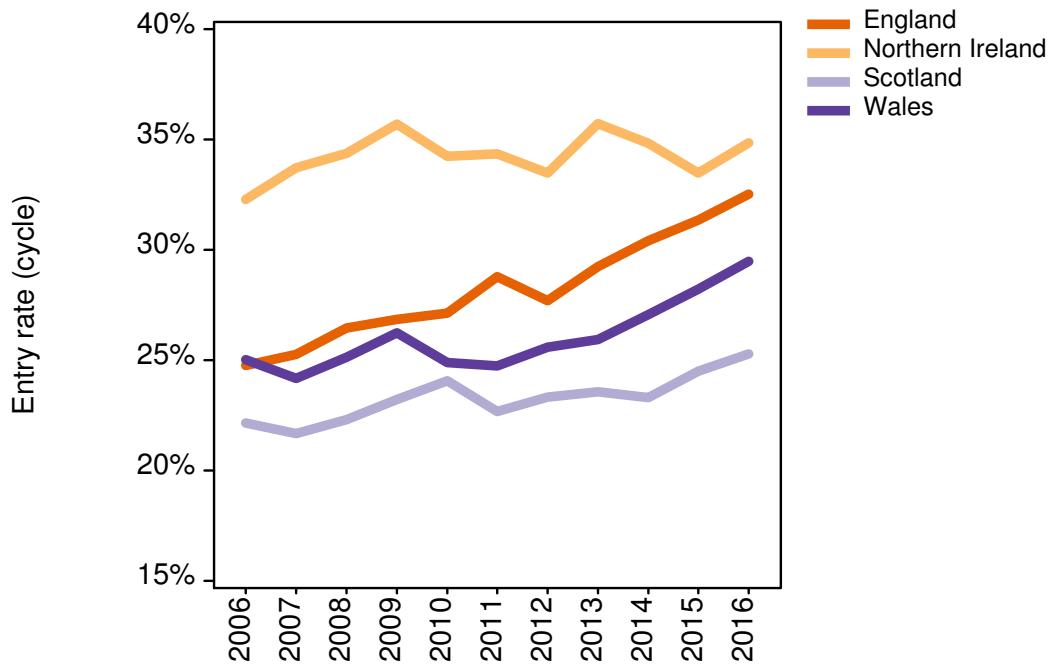
In 2016, 32.5 per cent of the English 18 year old population were accepted into higher education, an increase of 1.2 percentage points, continuing the trend of increasing entry rates recorded every year since 2012. This was the highest level recorded for this group of applicants, and 7.7 percentage points higher than in 2006 (31 per cent proportionally).

Following decreases in 2014 and 2015 in the entry rate for 18 year olds in Northern Ireland, the entry rate increased in 2016 to 34.8 per cent, the same level as in 2014. Entry rates for 18 year olds from Northern Ireland have varied between 32.3 per cent and 35.7 per cent across the period, the highest rate of any country across the UK in each year reported.

Entry rates for 18 year olds in Scotland are lower than for other countries on this measure, since not all higher education provision in further education colleges, an important component of provision in Scotland, is recruited for through UCAS. Around one third of young entrants in Scotland will be in further education colleges and not recorded in these statistics. The UCAS entry rates for 18 year olds in Scotland increased in 2016 to 25.3 per cent (+0.8 percentage points), the highest recorded in the period.

In Wales, the entry rate increased by 1.3 percentage points to 29.5 per cent, the highest rate seen across the period, and continuing the trend of increasing entry rates recorded each year since 2011.

Figure 12 Proportion of 18 year olds accepted for entry by cycle and country of domicile



19 year old entry rates increase to new highs in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, but decrease in England

The first time entry rate of 19 year olds is the proportion of the 19 year old population that are accepted for entry to higher education for the first time. It excludes the small number of accepted applicants who were accepted to start higher education at age 18, but who then applied and were accepted again at age 19. It does not include acceptances at age 18 who intend to start their courses age 19 (deferred acceptances) since these are already included in the 18 year old cycle-based entry rate.

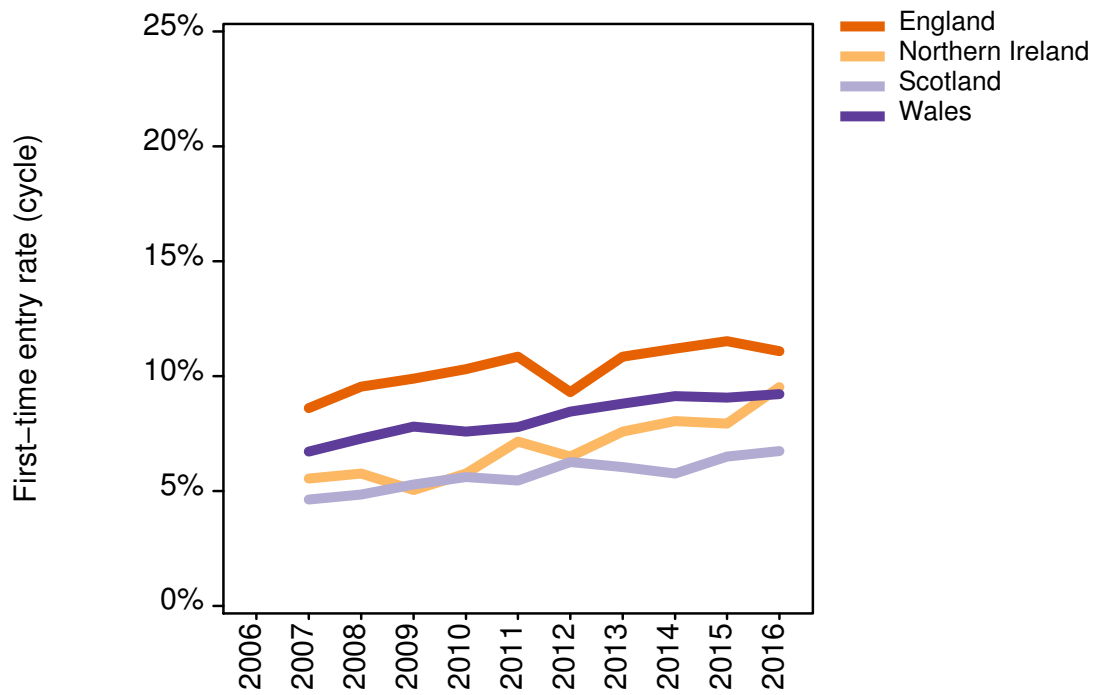
In 2016, the first time entry rate for 19 year olds from England decreased by 0.4 percentage points to 11.1 per cent. This decrease is the first since 2012.

For 19 year olds in Northern Ireland, the first time entry rate increased by +1.6 percentage points to 9.5 per cent, the highest on record. This increase follows a decrease in the entry rate at age 18 for the same cohort in 2015.

Entry rates for 19 year olds in Scotland are lower than for other countries on this measure, since not all higher education provision in colleges in Scotland is recruited for through UCAS. After falling for two successive years, the first time entry rate for 19 year olds from Scotland increased by 0.7 percentage points to 6.5 per cent in 2015, and increased again by 0.2 percentage points to 6.7 per cent in 2016, the highest on record.

For 19 year olds in Wales, the first time entry rate in 2016 was 9.2 per cent, an increase of 0.2 percentage points on 2015.

Figure 13 Proportion of 19 year olds accepted for entry for the first time by country of domicile



Cohort entry rates for young people reach highs across England, Wales, and Scotland

When looking at entry rates for single age groups, changes in entry year can make it difficult to interpret whether young people are becoming more or less likely to enter higher education.

One measure that is less influenced by changes in age of entry is a cohort-based entry rate that combines entry to higher education at ages 18 and 19. It has the advantage that it is unaffected by changes in the choice to apply and be accepted for entry at ages 18 or 19. It has the disadvantage that it cannot yet report on a complete rate for the cohort that was aged 18 in 2016, since they are yet to have the opportunity to apply at age 19. Figure 14 shows the proportion of a young cohort (referenced by the year the cohort would be aged 18) that is accepted for entry aged either 18 or 19.

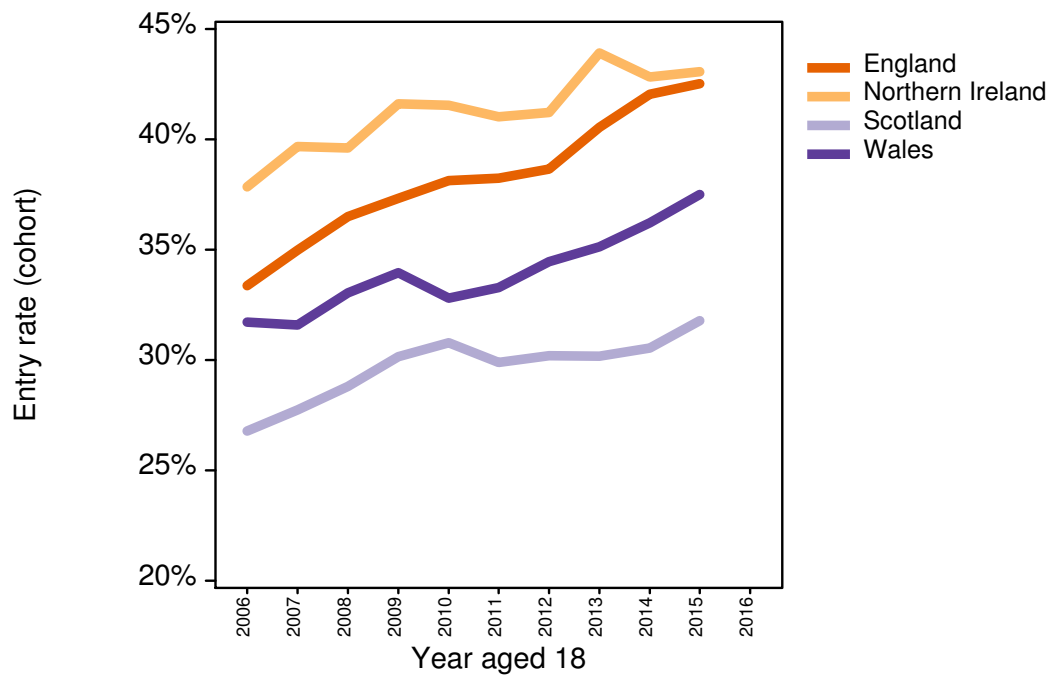
In England, 42.5 per cent of the cohort aged 18 in 2015 were accepted to enter higher education either at age 18 in 2015 or at age 19 in 2016, the highest on record. This was an increase of 0.5 percentage points compared to the cohort aged 18 in 2014. This increase was driven by the increase in the 18 year old entry rate only, since the first time 19 year old entry rate for the cohort fell. It continued the trend of annual increases for each cohort since those aged 18 in 2006. The cohort from England aged 18 in 2015 was 28 per cent more likely to be accepted to higher education through UCAS by the age of 19 than the cohort that was age 18 in 2006, the greatest rate of increase recorded across the countries of the UK.

The entry rate for the 2015 cohort from Wales increased by 1.3 percentage points to 37.5 per cent, a new high. This rate was 5.8 percentage points higher than the rate for the cohort that was 18 in 2006, making them 18 per cent more likely to enter higher education than the earlier cohort.

For young people from Northern Ireland, the entry rate for the cohort aged 18 in 2014 fell by 1.1 percentage points, but in 2015 it increased by 0.2 percentage points to reach 43.1 per cent. The increase in 2016 is driven by the increase in the first time 19 year old entry rate, which more than offset the fall in the 18 year old entry rate for the cohort.

The 2015 cohort entry rate for Scotland (lower than on comparable student record measures since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS) increased by +1.2 percentage points to 31.8 per cent. This is the largest single year increase in the cohort entry rate for Scotland since 2009, resulting in the cohort that was 18 in 2015 being 19 per cent more likely to have been accepted to enter higher education by age 19 than the cohort age 18 in 2006.

Figure 14 Young entry rate (cohort) by country



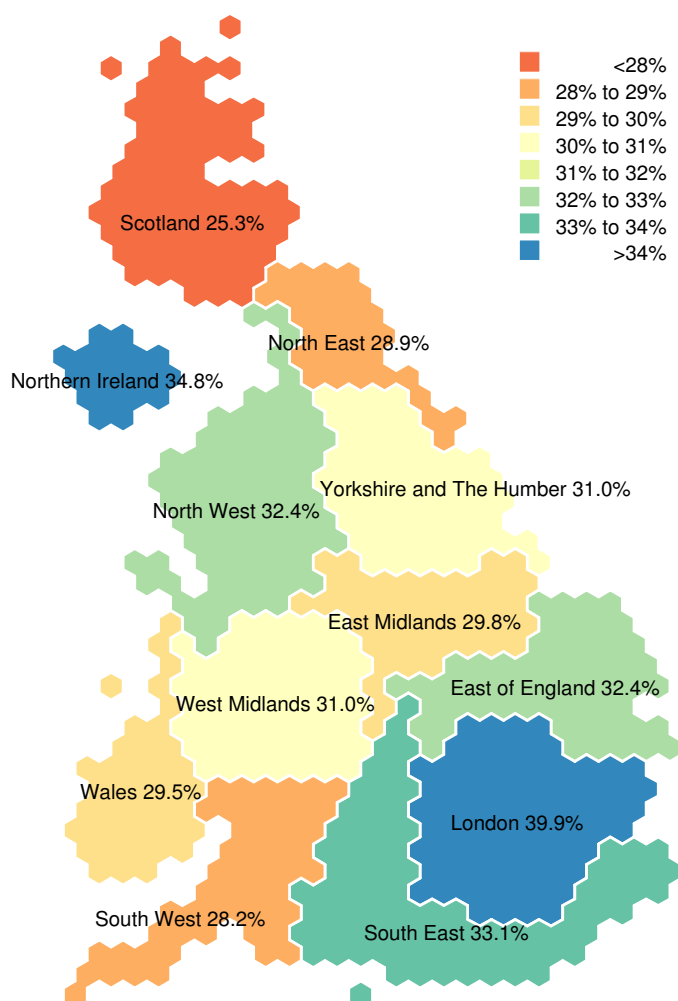
Entry rates by region

The geographical patterns of English regional entry rates, together with entry rates for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, can be shown on maps. The maps used (see Thomas, B. and Dorling, D., 2007, Identity in Britain: A cradle-to-grave atlas, Bristol: Policy Press) are designed so that the size of each area approximates the size of its population, and their arrangement approximates the geographical locations of the areas.

Entry rates highest in Northern Ireland and London in 2016

Figure 15 maps the 2016 entry rates for 18 year olds by region. Amongst these units of English regions and other UK countries, London (39.9 per cent) and Northern Ireland (34.8 per cent) had the highest entry rates amongst their 18 year old populations in 2016. Scotland (25.3 per cent, but not all higher education in Scotland is recorded by UCAS), the South West (28.2 per cent), and the North East (28.9 per cent) are the regions with the lowest entry rates in 2016.

Figure 15 Entry rates in 2016 for UK 18 year olds by region and country



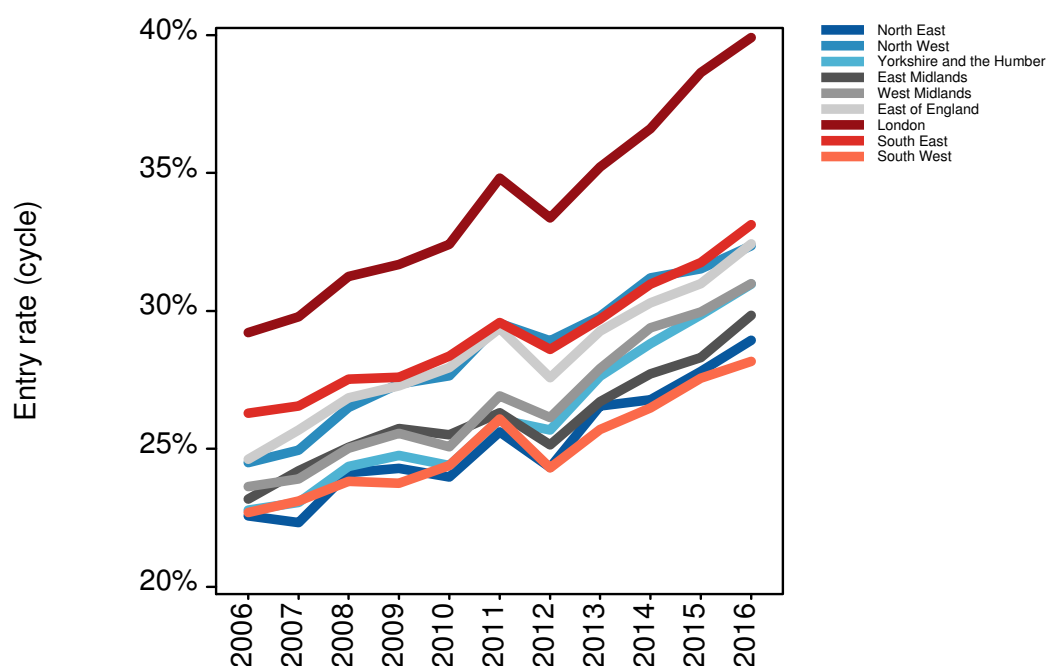
Entry rates increase in all regions of England

The trends in entry rates for regions in England are shown in Figure 16. The trends for each region are similar over the period, with entry rates increasing between 2006 and 2011, falling in 2012, then increasing each year since. In 2016, entry rates increased for all regions. The East Midlands, East of England, South East, and London had the largest increases of between 1.3 and 1.5 percentage points, meaning 18 year olds in those regions were between 3 to 5 per cent more likely to enter HE proportionally. The North West (+0.8 percentage points, +2.6 per cent proportionally) and the South West (+0.6 percentage points, +2.2 per cent proportionally) had the smallest increases in entry rates in 2016.

London and Yorkshire and the Humber show largest increases in 18 year old entry rates between 2006 and 2016

Entry rates increased between 2006 and 2016 for all regions, with the largest increases in London (+10.7 percentage points, +37 per cent proportionally) and Yorkshire and the Humber (+8.2 percentage points, +36 per cent proportionally). The entry rate in the South West had the lowest increase in entry rates during this period, increasing by +5.5 percentage points (+24 per cent proportionally).

Figure 16 Entry rates for 18 year olds by English region



Entry rates by parliamentary constituency

There are 650 parliamentary constituencies in the UK (533 in England, 59 in Scotland, 40 in Wales, and 18 in Northern Ireland). Parliamentary constituencies are much smaller than regions, with populations of typically just over 1,000 18 year olds, and are designed to have a more uniform population size than other geographies. This makes them a particularly suitable smaller geographical unit for reporting entry rates.

Entry rates of 18 year olds vary across constituencies from 14 per cent to 63 per cent

Figure 17 shows all the parliamentary constituencies in the UK. In this map, each parliamentary constituency is shown as a circle, where the size of each circle approximates the size of the constituency population, and their arrangement approximates the geographical locations of the constituencies.

The proportion of 18 year olds in a constituency who enter higher education through UCAS varied from 14 per cent to 63 per cent in 2016. Young people living in the constituencies with the highest entry rates were four and a half times more likely to enter higher education than those living in constituencies with the lowest rates.

Entry rates also vary between constituencies within a region. In the East of England (the region with the most variation in entry rates in 2016), entry rates ranged from 15 per cent in the constituency with the lowest entry rate, to 59 per cent in the constituency with the highest entry rate. This was a 45 percentage point range in entry rates within the region, with 18 year olds in the constituency with the highest entry rate in the region being almost four times as likely to enter higher education than those in the constituency with the lowest entry rate. In the North East, the English region with the least variation, entry rates ranged from 23 to 40 per cent (17 percentage points).

Similar variation was seen among parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

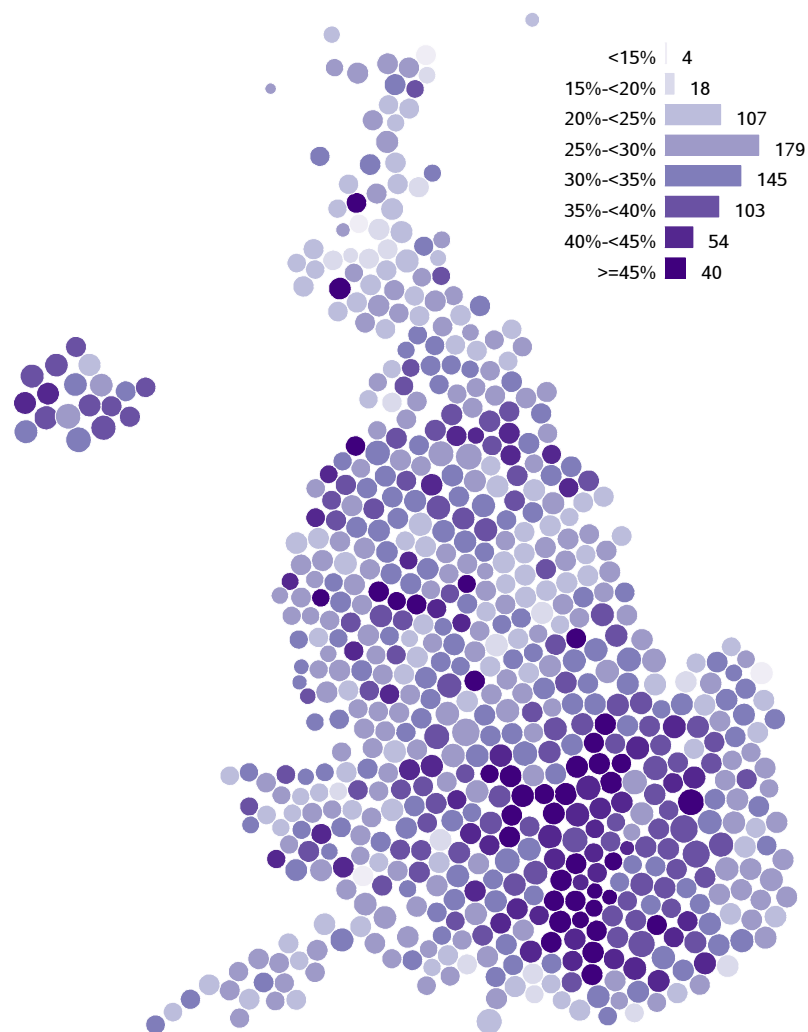
In Wales, the range was from 20 per cent to 44 per cent, while in Northern Ireland, the range was from 24 per cent to 41 per cent.

In Scotland, entry rates range from 15 per cent to 46 per cent. Around one third of young entrants in Scotland will be studying higher education at a further education college in Scotland which is not recorded through UCAS. The proportion studying in further education colleges in some constituencies can be higher, at around half. So the UCAS entry rates in these constituencies will understate total HE entry rates, including HE in further education colleges, possibly by around one half in extreme cases.

Just under half of parliamentary constituencies have 18 year old entry rates that fall within a 10 percentage point band between 25 per cent and 35 per cent. A relatively small number of constituencies have entry rates lower than 20 per cent (22) or 45 per cent or higher (40).

Changes in entry rates by parliamentary constituency can be further explored using the entry rate data explorer for parliamentary constituencies on the UCAS website, in the 'Data and analysis' section.

Figure 17 Entry rates in 2016 for UK 18 year olds by parliamentary constituency



Wide range of changes in entry rates between 2006 and 2016

The relatively small population of constituencies means that changes in entry rates from one cycle to the next can have a high ratio of random variation compared to the level of underlying annual change. Looking at changes over a longer period, where underlying changes may be greater, can reduce this.

In 2006, the entry rates were lower than in 2016 for most constituencies, with most constituencies (over 80 per cent) having entry rates of between 15 and 35 per cent. Between 2006 and 2016, entry rates increased in the majority of constituencies. In 26 constituencies (4 per cent), the entry rate in 2016 was lower than the entry rate in 2006. In 114 constituencies (18 per cent), the entry rate of 18 year olds increased by (proportionally) 50 per cent or more.

Changes in entry rates by parliamentary constituency can be further explored using the entry rate data explorer for parliamentary constituencies on the UCAS website, in the 'Data and analysis' section.

Figure 18 Entry rates in 2006 for UK 18 year olds by parliamentary constituency

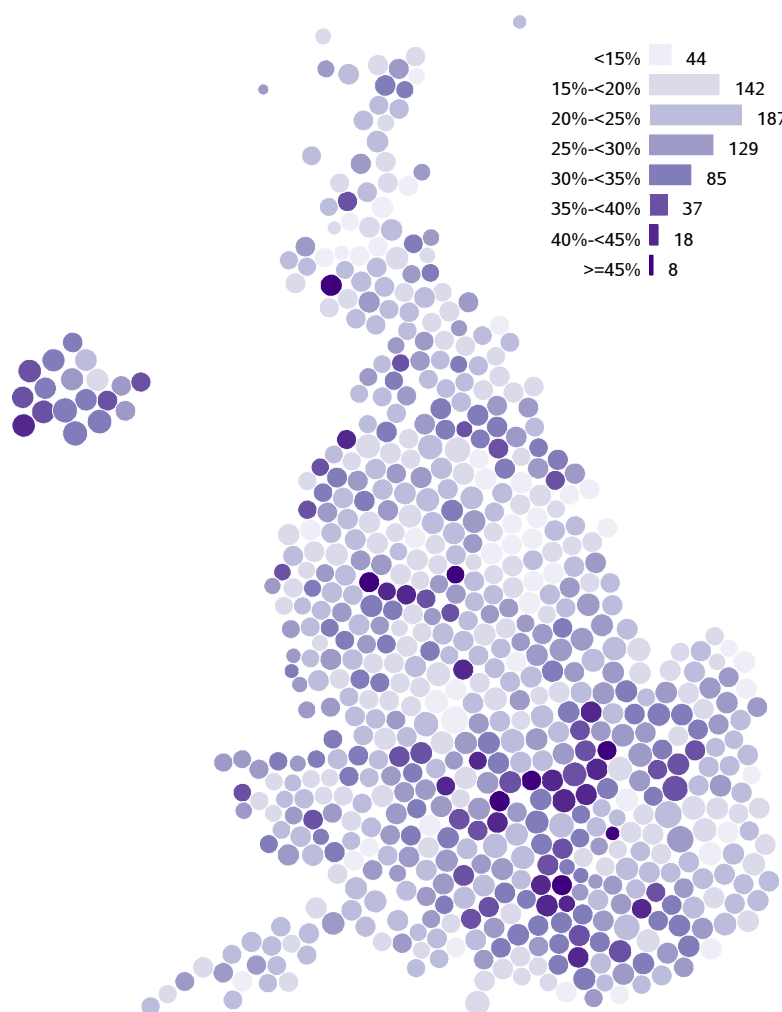
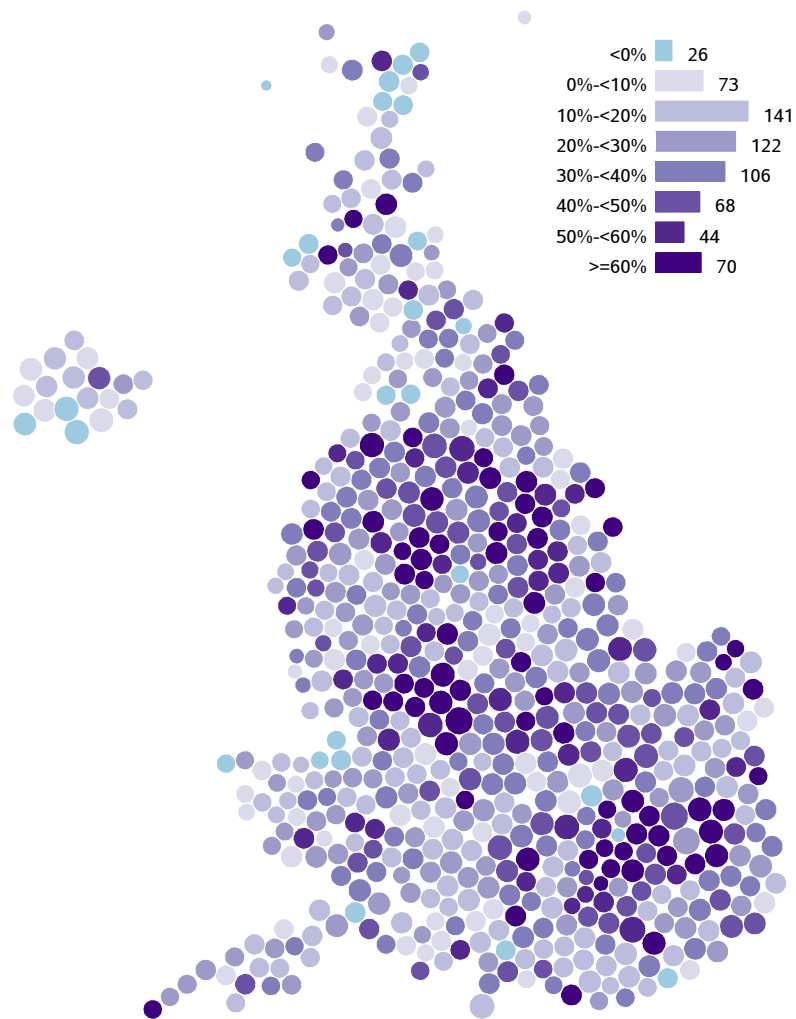


Figure 19 Proportional change in 18 year old entry between 2006 and 2016 by parliamentary constituency



Acceptances and entry rates from Europe

Changes in acceptances vary across European countries

Acceptances from applicants domiciled in the EU, excluding the UK, increased by 7 per cent in the 2016 cycle. The geographical patterns in the number of acceptances, the proportional increase in acceptances, and young entry rates by country can be shown on maps. The following maps show selected countries in the EU, and also Norway and Switzerland.

Figure 20 shows the number of acceptances in 2016 from countries across Europe. Those domiciled in France have the largest number of acceptances, at 3,200 in 2016. Other countries with a large number of acceptances are Italy and Romania, each with over 2,500 placed applicants to UK higher education in 2016. Spain, Germany, and Poland all had over 2,000 placed applicants.

The proportional change in acceptances from applicants domiciled in Europe, for different countries, is shown in Figure 21. The largest proportional increase (51 per cent) was from Slovakia, which had 560 acceptances in 2016. The second largest proportional increase (48 per cent) was from Croatia, the newest member of the EU, which had 250 acceptances in 2016.

Of the countries with a proportional increase of more than the 7 per cent average, Poland (2,100 acceptances, +27 per cent proportionally), Germany (2,100 acceptances, +21 per cent proportionally), Spain (2,200 acceptances, +18 per cent proportionally), and Bulgaria (1,800 acceptances, +9 per cent proportionally) all had more than 1,000 acceptances in 2016.

Acceptances decreased from six countries across Europe, with Norway (1,000 acceptances, -30 per cent proportionally) having the largest absolute decrease, and the Republic of Ireland (2,000 acceptances, -6 per cent proportionally), having the largest absolute decrease of the countries in the EU.

Figure 20 Number of acceptances in 2016 by selected European country (with GDP per capita group shown – H = higher GDP, M = medium GDP, L = lower GDP)

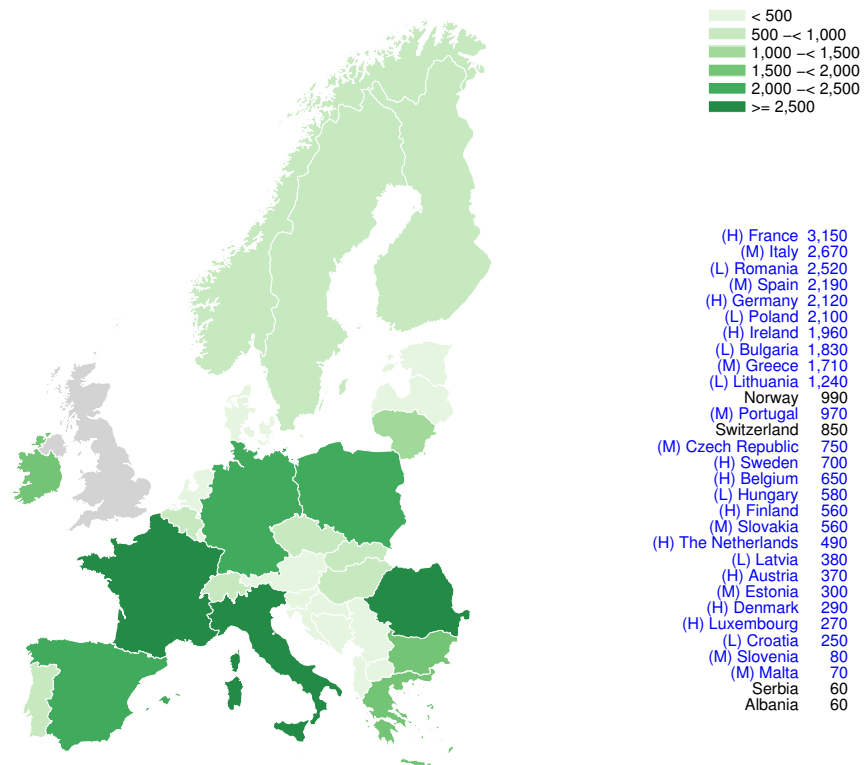
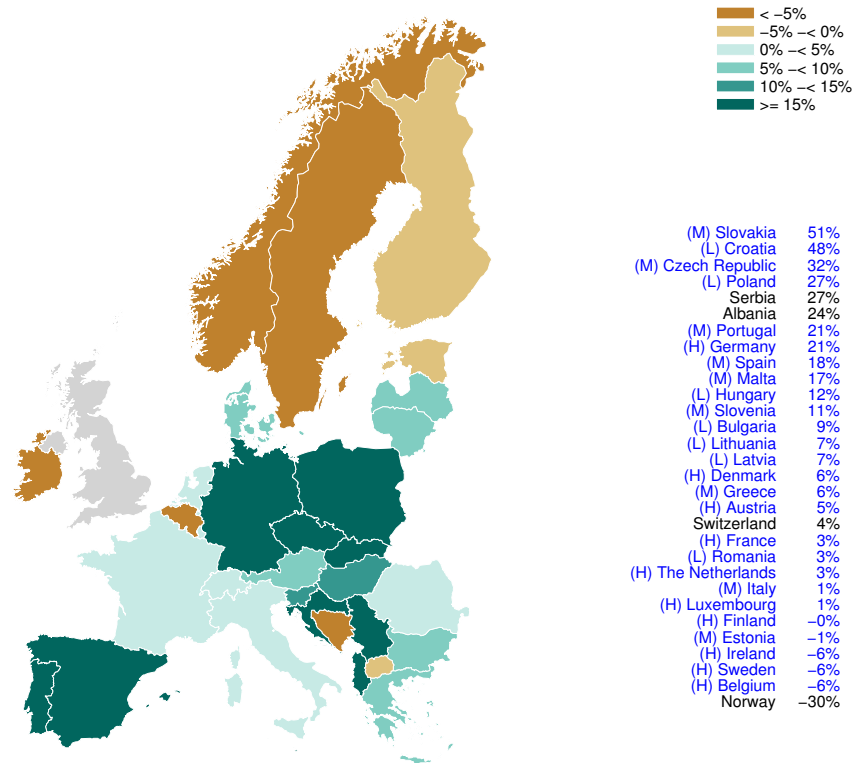


Figure 21 Changes in acceptances for 2016 relative to 2015, by selected European country (with GDP per capita group shown – H = higher GDP, M = medium GDP, L = lower GDP)

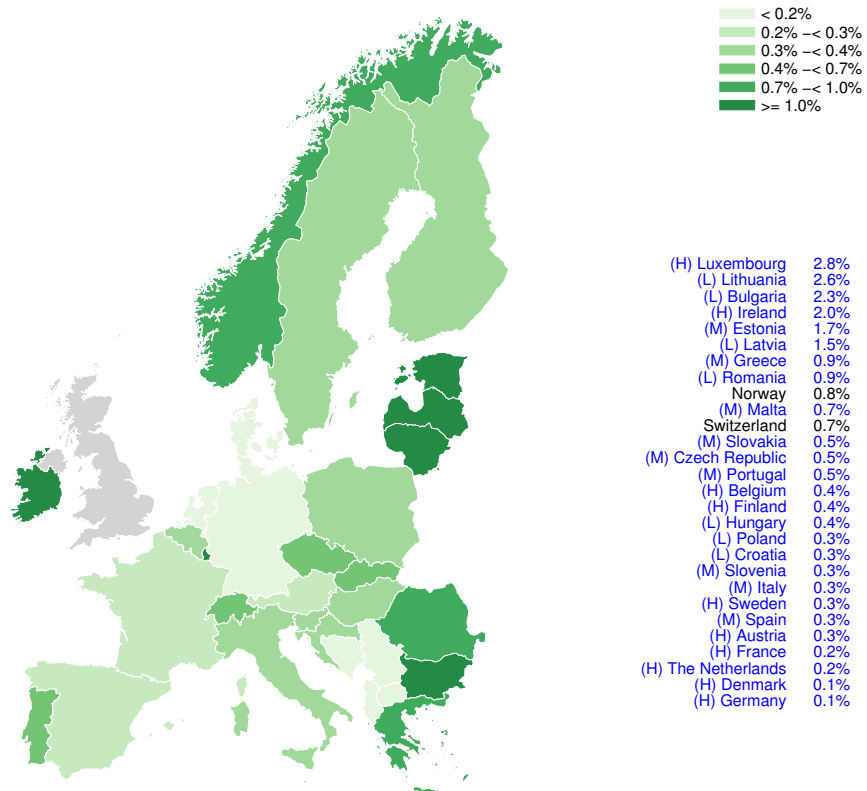


Entry rates vary across European countries

Figure 22 shows the estimated cohort entry rate by age 19 from countries across Europe for young people that were age 18 in 2015. The cohort entry rate is the proportion of the population accepted to UK higher education through UCAS either at age 18 or age 19. The following entry rates are calculated using population estimates published by The World Bank (The World Bank: Health Nutrition and Population Statistics: The United Nations Population Division’s World Population Prospects, and World Bank’s estimates from World Bank’s population projections).

The cohort entry rate for those aged 18 in 2015 varied from 0.1 per cent of the young population from Germany to 2.8 per cent of the young population from Luxembourg.

Figure 22 Young entry rate (cohort) by selected European country (with GDP per capita group shown – H = higher GDP, M = medium GDP, L = lower GDP)



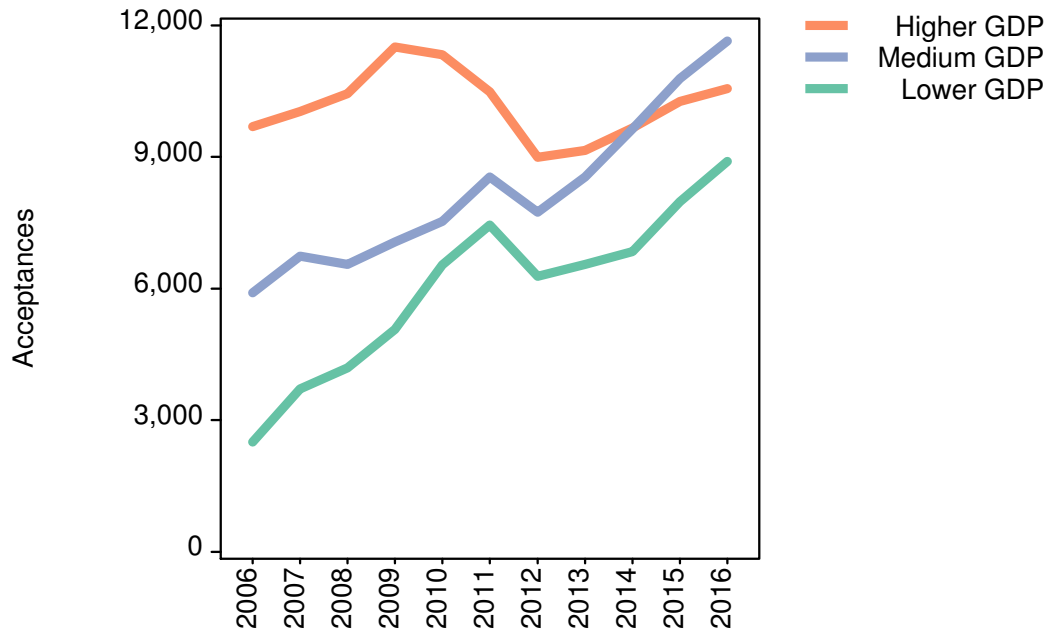
Number of acceptances from European countries varies by GDP

Figure 23 shows the number of acceptances from non-UK EU applicants split by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of their country of home domicile (The World Bank: World Development Indicators). Countries are grouped into three categories, referred to as 'GDP groups'; countries with a GDP per capita of \$0 – \$15,000 were assigned to the lower GDP group, countries with a GDP per capita of >\$15,000 – \$30,000 were assigned to the medium GDP group, and countries with a GDP per capita of >\$30,000 were assigned to the higher GDP group. Countries that entered the EU during the reporting period (Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, and Croatia in 2013) have their acceptance numbers included only once they became EU members.

The trends in acceptances by country GDP groups vary. In 2006, there were 9,700 acceptances from higher GDP European countries, over 50 per cent more than the number of acceptances from medium GDP countries (5,900), and three and a half times more than lower GDP countries (2,700). Since then, the number of acceptances from higher GDP countries increased to a high of 11,500 in 2009, before falling to a low of 9,000 in 2012, then increasing in each consecutive year to reach 10,500 in 2016, 9 per cent higher than at the start of the period in 2006.

Acceptances from medium and lower GDP countries had a different trend. Acceptances from medium GDP countries increased in every cycle, with the exception of the 2008 and 2012 cycles, to reach 11,600 acceptances in 2016, nearly double the number in 2006, and greater than the number of acceptances from higher GDP countries. Acceptances from lower GDP countries also increased in each year, except in 2012, to reach 8,900 in 2016, three and a half times higher than in 2006.

Figure 23 Non-UK EU acceptances by GDP group of EU country



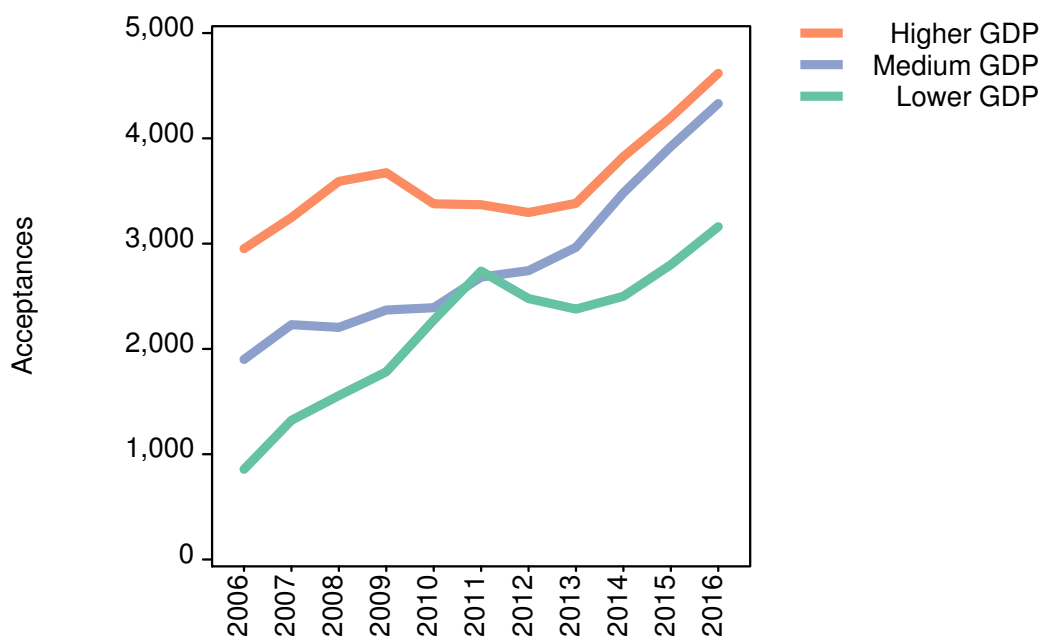
Acceptances to higher tariff providers increase again to new highs for all GDP EU country groups

Figure 24 shows the number of acceptances to higher tariff providers from each GDP country group.

In 2016, acceptances to higher tariff providers increased for all GDP country groups to their highest recorded values. Acceptances from higher GDP countries increased by 400 (+10 per cent proportionally) to 4,600, the fourth consecutive increase in acceptances from these countries to higher tariff providers. Acceptances from medium GDP countries also increased by 400 (+10 per cent proportionally) to 4,300, as did those from lower GDP countries, where acceptances also increased by 400 (+13 per cent proportionally) to reach 3,200.

Throughout the period, there have been more acceptances from higher GDP countries than from medium or lower GDP countries. Since 2006, the number of acceptances to higher tariff providers has increased by 1,600 (+57 per cent proportionally) for higher GDP countries, by 2,400 (+128 per cent proportionally) for medium GDP countries, and by 2,200 (+268 per cent proportionally) for lower GDP countries.

Figure 24 Non-UK EU acceptances by GDP group of EU country to higher tariff providers



Acceptances to medium and lower tariff providers from higher GDP countries fall in 2016, but increase for other countries

Acceptances to medium tariff providers from each GDP country group are shown in Figure 25. For most of the period, there were more acceptances to medium tariff providers from higher GDP countries than there were from medium and lower GDP countries. However, since 2015, the number of acceptances from medium GDP group countries was higher than the number of acceptances from higher GDP countries.

Between 2006 and 2009, the number of acceptances from higher GDP countries increased by 18 per cent to 4,300, the highest on record, before falling in each of the following three years to reach their lowest value of 3,200 in 2012. Acceptances have since remained broadly constant at between 3,200 and 3,400.

Acceptances from medium GDP countries increased from 2,000 in 2006 to 3,600 in 2015 (+1,600, +79 per cent), before increasing again in 2016 to 3,800 (+200, +6 per cent) the highest on record, and higher than the number of acceptances from higher GDP countries.

Acceptances from lower GDP countries increased from 900 in 2006 to 2,000 in 2015 (+1,100, +129 per cent), and then again in 2016 to 2,300 (+300, +15 per cent). Despite the large growth in acceptances from lower GDP countries across the period, the number of acceptances from this group remains lower than for medium and higher GDP countries.

Figure 26 shows acceptances to lower tariff providers from each GDP country group. The trends in acceptances to lower tariff providers are similar but more pronounced than the trends for medium tariff providers. At the start of the period, acceptances from higher GDP countries were higher than for other countries, but reached a low in 2012 before remaining broadly stable until 2016. Acceptances from medium GDP countries increased between 2006 and 2011, decreased in 2012, and then increased in each subsequent year. Acceptances from lower GDP countries also increased between 2006 and 2011, decreased in 2012, and increased each year since. In 2016, there were 3,500 acceptances to lower tariff providers from both the medium and lower GDP country groups, the highest number on record, and more than the number of acceptances from higher GDP countries (2,600) to that tariff group.

In 2016, there were more acceptances from higher and medium GDP countries to higher tariff providers than there were from these countries to medium or lower tariff providers. The number of acceptances from lower GDP countries was higher at lower tariff providers than it was at higher and medium tariff providers.

Figure 25 Non-UK EU acceptances by GDP group of EU country to medium tariff providers

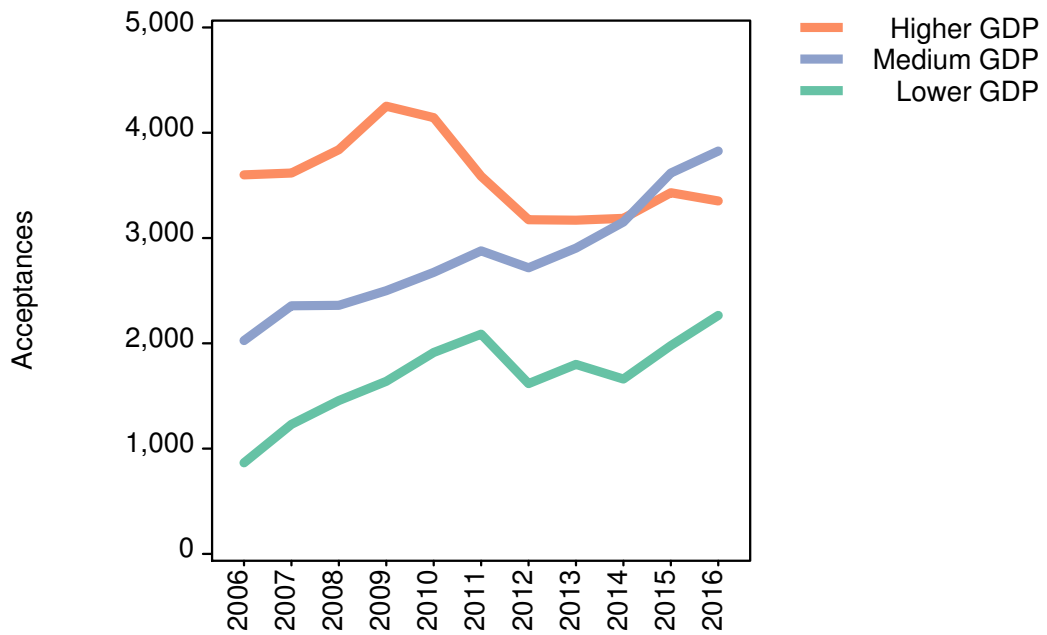
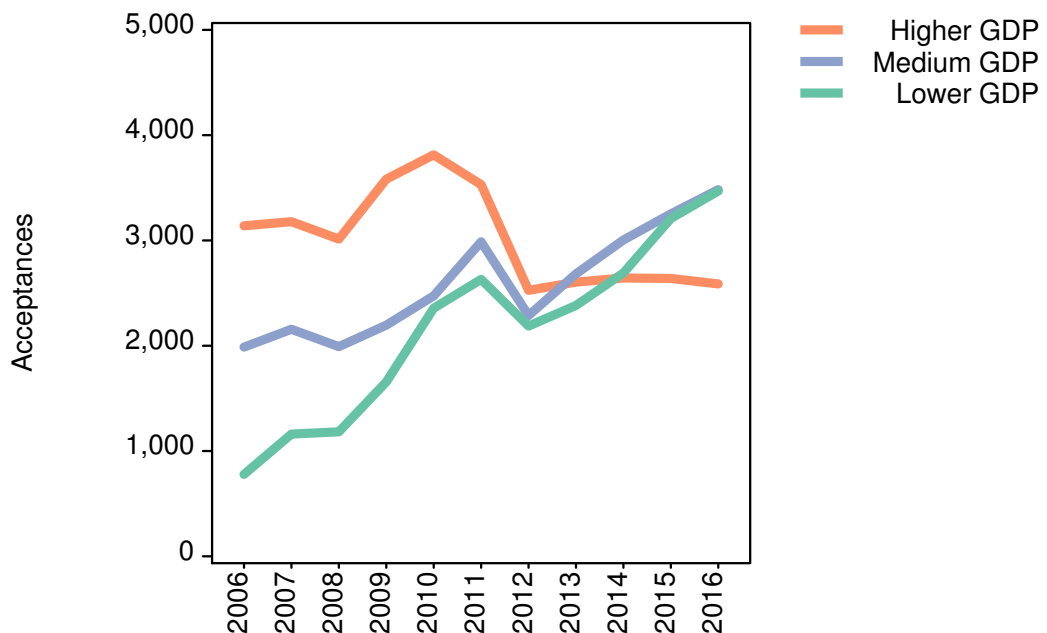


Figure 26 Non-UK EU acceptances by GDP group of EU country to lower tariff providers

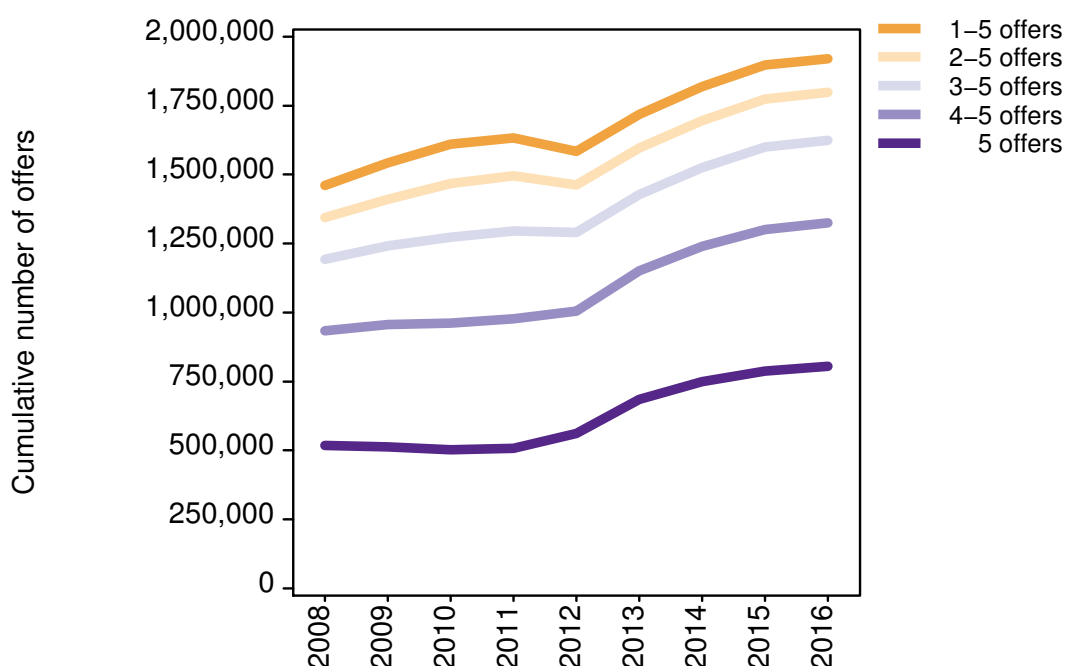


Offer-making to main scheme applicants in 2016

Offers made in 2016 increase by 1.2 per cent to over 1.9 million, highest recorded total

The number of offers made to all main scheme applicants is shown in Figure 27. The offers made are shown split by the number of offers received by the applicant (cumulative totals). The total number of offers made (represented by the 1-5 offers) increased in 2016 by 23,700 (+1.2 per cent) to just over 1.9 million, the highest number of offers made and continuing the trend seen since 2013 of an increasing number of offers. The number of offers made to applicants who received offers for all five of their choices increased by 16,600 (+2.1 per cent). The total number of offers made to applicants with four or five offers also reached a record high of more than 1.3 million. This means that for the fourth consecutive year, more than two thirds of offers were made to applicants with four or five offers to choose between, continuing the trend that offer-making is becoming more concentrated on applicants with four or five offers.

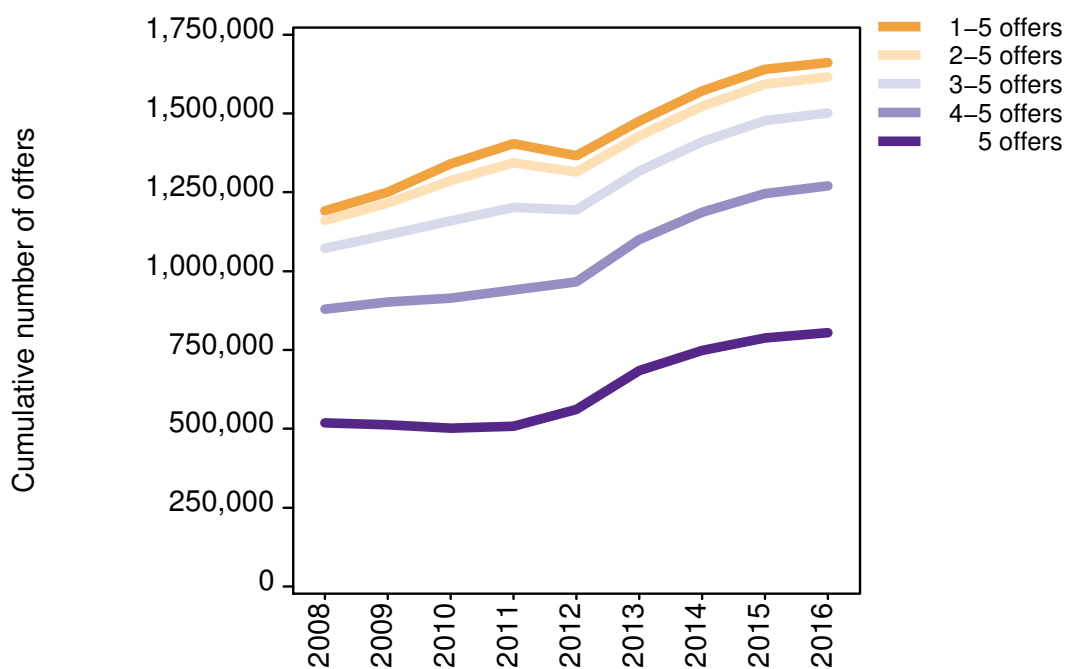
Figure 27 Total number of offers made to all main scheme applicants by number of offers received (cumulative categories)



Offers made to all applicants who make a full set of choices increase by 1 per cent to almost 1.7 million, the highest level recorded

Main scheme applicants who make five choices represent the large majority of applications and form a more uniform group to assess patterns in the distribution of offers made. There was an increase in total offers made to this group of 1.3 per cent (21,500) to almost 1.7 million offers, the highest level recorded. More than three quarters of offers made to this group were received by applicants who received four or five offers in total. The greatest proportional increase in number of offers made to five choice applicants was to those who received the maximum five offers, an increase of +16,600, or +2.1 per cent, to 804,900 (representing 161,000 applicants with five offers).

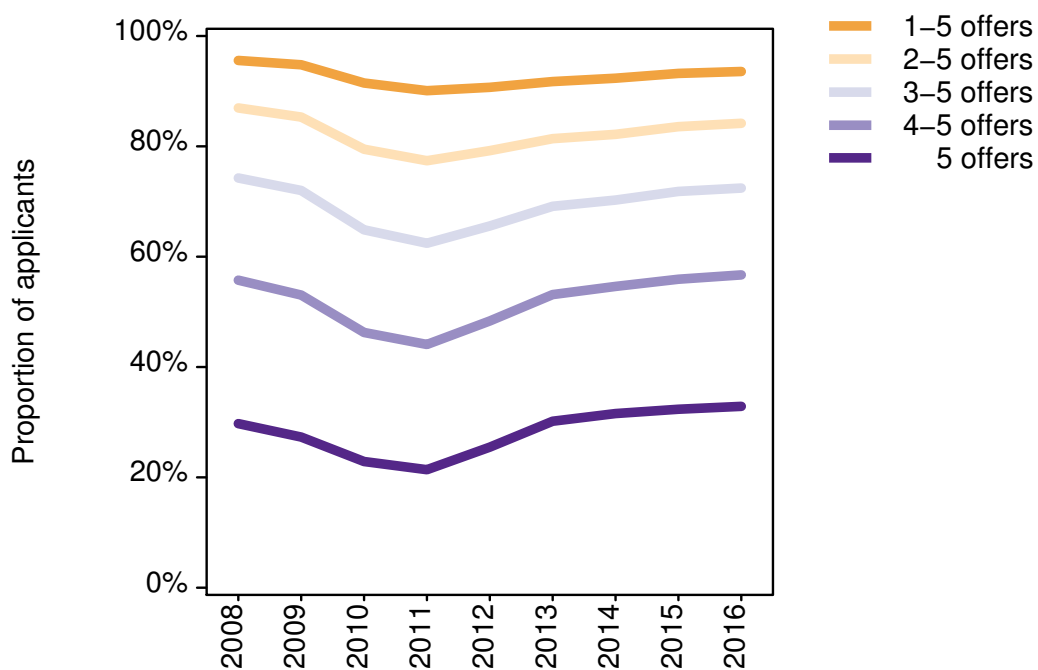
Figure 28 Total number of offers made to all applicants who made five choices by number of offers received (cumulative categories)



Over half of applicants receive four or more offers and almost a third have five offers to choose between

High offer rates seen at the start of the period (2008 cycle) then reduced each cycle to reach a low point in 2011. However, since 2011 a greater share of applicants have received offers. There were further increases in 2016, with 94 per cent of all applicants who made five choices receiving at least one offer (an increase of 0.3 percentage points) and 57 per cent of these applicants receiving four or five offers (an increase of 0.8 percentage points). The proportion of applicants having the maximum five offers to choose between increased to 33 per cent in 2016, the highest level recorded. Applicants were 29 per cent more likely to have five offers than in 2012, and 54 per cent more likely than in 2011.

Figure 29 Proportion of all main scheme applicants who made five choices by number of offers received (cumulative categories)



Offer rates for young applicants increase in 2016 to new highs

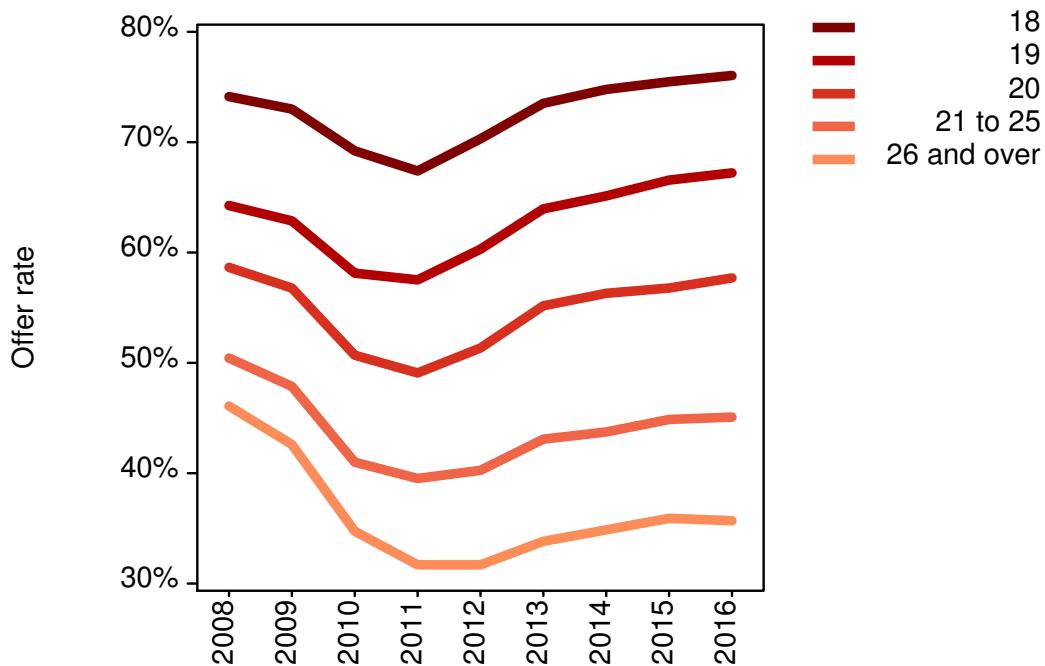
Applications from younger applicants are more likely to receive offers than applicants in other age groups. Applications from 18 year old applicants consistently had the highest chance of receiving an offer, and this increased in 2016 to reach 76.1 per cent, the new highest total recorded over the period and almost 9 percentage points higher than in 2011. Applications from 19 year olds were less likely to receive an offer, compared to those from 18 year olds, but showed a similar pattern with an increase in 2016 to 67.2 per cent, also a new high.

Offer rates to applicants aged between 20 and 25 increase in 2016, but fall for older applicants

Applications from applicants aged 20 and over were less likely to receive offers than those aged 18 and 19. In 2016, 57.7 per cent of applications from 20 year old applicants received offers (up 0.9 percentage points from the 2015 cycle). The offer rate of 45.1 per cent for applicants aged 21 to 25 was also up on 2015, by 0.2 percentage points.

The offer rate for applicants aged 26 and older was 35.7 per cent in 2016, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points on 2015. This is the first time the offer rate had fallen for this age group since 2011. The offer rate for those aged 26 and older was less than half the offer rate for 18 year olds, with a gap of 40 percentage points between them in 2016.

Figure 30 Offer rate (application level) for all main scheme applicants by age group, excluding under 18s



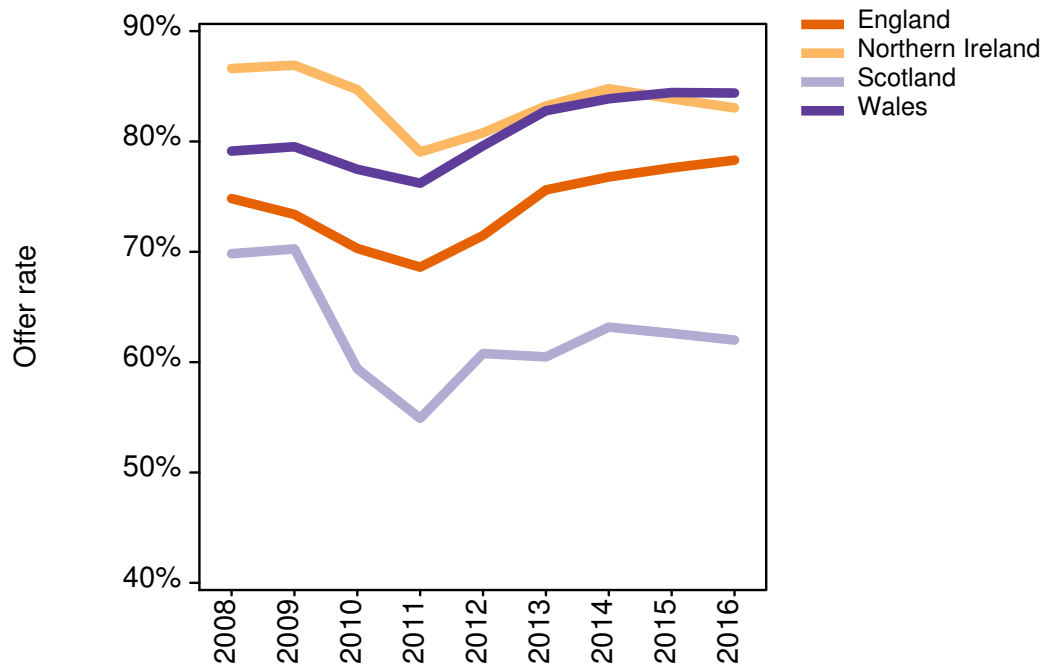
Offer-making by providers

Offer-making rates to applications will depend on the choices made by applicants (in terms of the courses applied to) as well as the decisions made by providers. However, since the pattern of choices made by applicants in terms of, for example, tuition fees, has been shown to be generally similar over this period, changes in trends in offer-making can be interpreted primarily as changes in provider offer-making decisions – in particular, their demand for applicants of different types. Given the strong association of the offer rate with age, this analysis concentrates on offers made to 18 year old UK domiciled applicants to better identify changes in provider behaviour.

English providers more likely than ever to make offers to UK 18 year olds, offer rates from Scottish and Northern Irish providers continue to decrease

The proportion of applications from 18 year old UK domiciled applicants who receive offers varies by the country of the provider. Between 2009 and 2011, applications became less likely to receive offers from providers across the UK. From 2011 to 2014, the offer rates of English, Welsh, and Northern Irish providers increased year-on-year. In 2015, the offer rate from English and Welsh providers increased while the offer rate from Scottish and Northern Irish providers decreased. In 2016, this pattern continued, with offer rates from English providers increasing by 0.7 percentage points to 78.3 per cent, the highest on record, while offer rates from Northern Irish providers fell by 0.8 percentage points to 83.1 per cent. Offer rates from Scottish providers fell by 0.6 percentage points to 62.0 per cent, meaning that applications to Scottish providers continue to be less likely to receive offers than applications made to providers in other countries. Offer rates from Welsh providers remained unchanged at 84.4 per cent, meaning that applications to providers in Wales were, on average, more likely to receive offers than applications made to providers in other countries.

Figure 31 Offer rate (application level) to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants by country of provider

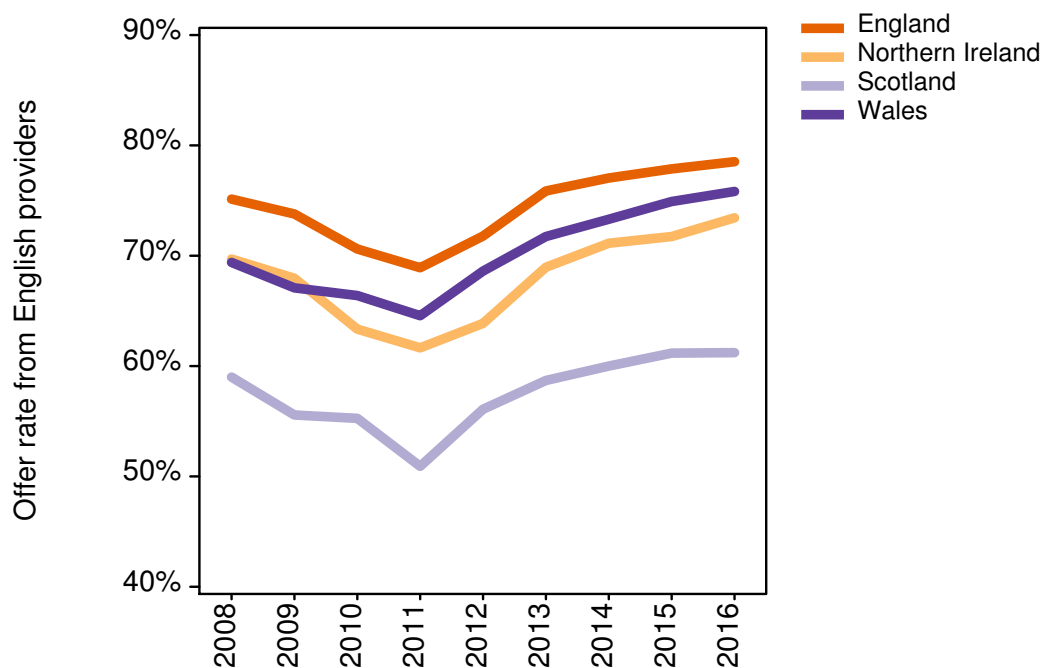


English providers increase offer rates to 18 year olds from England, Northern Ireland, and Wales

The offer rates in 2016 from English providers to applications from 18 year olds in the different UK countries varied. The offer rate to applicants from Scotland was 61.2 per cent, 73.4 per cent for applicants from Northern Ireland, 75.8 per cent for applicants from Wales, and 78.5 per cent for applicants from England. This range of around 15 to 18 percentage points is common across the period, and the trends in offer rates are generally undifferentiated by country of domicile.

In 2016, applications made to English providers from 18 year olds in all UK countries were more likely than ever to receive offers – between 13 and 20 per cent more likely (proportionally) than in 2011, when offer rates were at their lowest.

Figure 32 Offer rate (application level) from English providers to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants by country of domicile

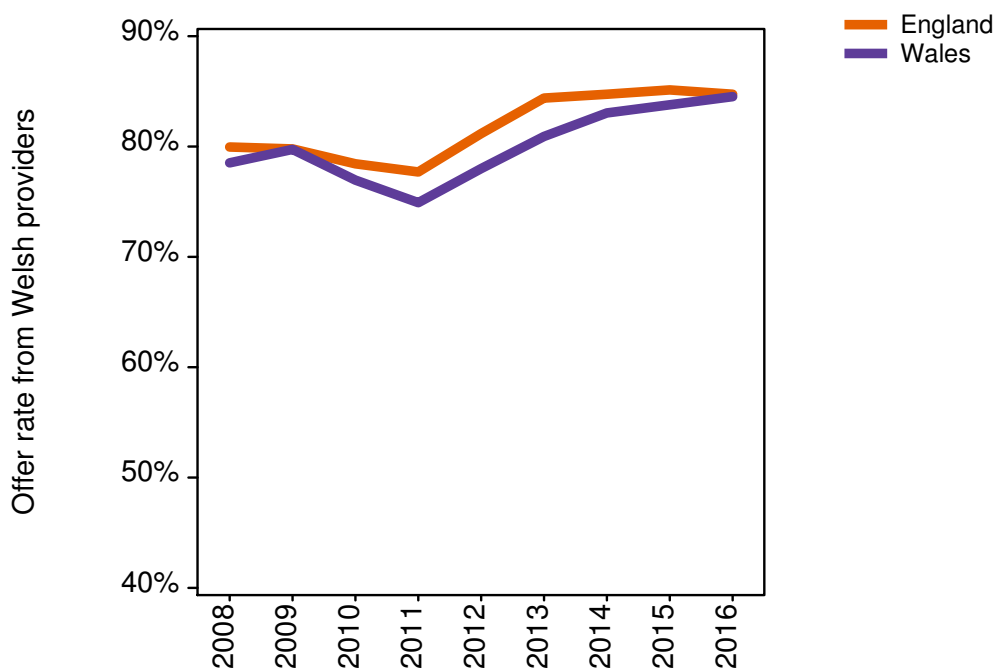


Providers in Wales increase offer-making to Welsh applications

The large majority of UK applications to Welsh providers come from Wales and England. The offer rate by Welsh providers in 2016 to applications from 18 year olds was similar for applications from Wales and from England (just under 85 per cent). The trends in offer rates have been similar to applicants from both countries over the period, with offer rates to English applicants tending to be slightly higher.

The offer rate from Welsh providers increased by 0.7 percentage points to 84.5 per cent for 18 year old applicants from Wales in 2016, its highest value on record, but decreased by 0.4 percentage points for 18 year old applicants from England to 84.7 per cent. For 18 year old applicants from Wales, this followed increases in each cycle from 2012 to 2015, meaning applications from Welsh applicants were 13 per cent more likely to receive an offer than in 2011. English applicants to Welsh providers are now 9 per cent more likely to receive an offer than in 2011.

Figure 33 Offer rate (application level) from Welsh providers to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants from England and Wales



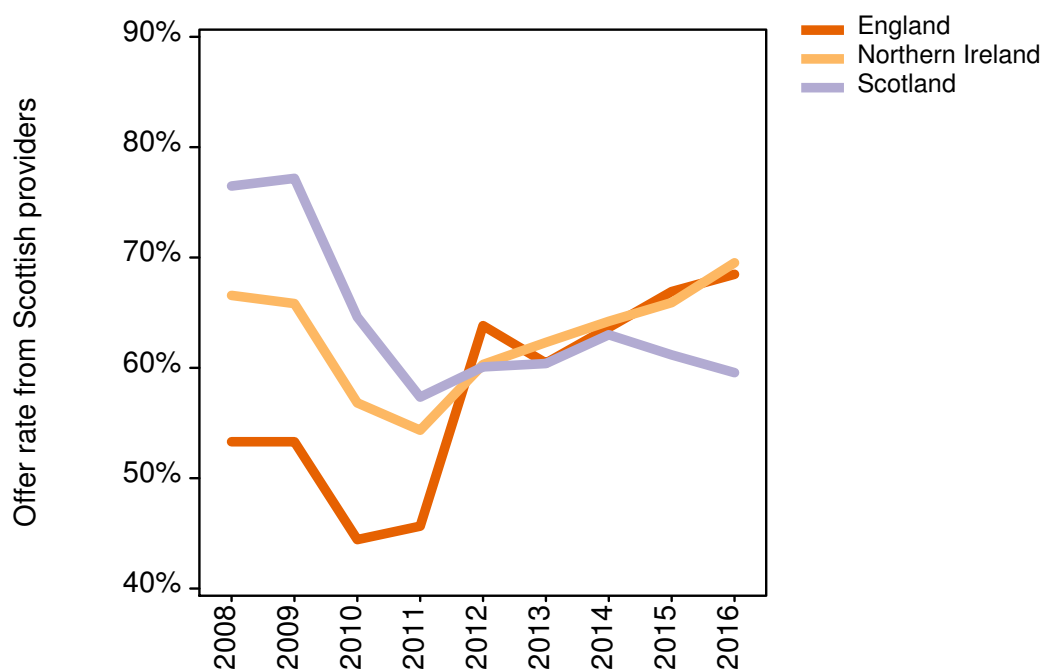
Offer rates by Scottish providers to 18 year old applicants from England and Northern Ireland at record level

In the 2008 and 2009 cycles, Scottish providers made offers to around three quarters of applications from 18 year olds from Scotland, and around a half of applications from 18 year olds from England. By 2011, offer-making rates to applications from both countries had decreased to 57.4 per cent for Scottish applicants and 45.7 per cent for English applicants.

In 2016, the offer rate to applications from Scottish applicants decreased by 1.6 percentage points to 59.6 per cent (-2.6 per cent proportionally) following a similar decrease in 2014. The offer rate to applications from English applicants increased by 1.6 percentage points to 68.5 per cent (+2.4 per cent proportionally), exceeding the previous recorded high of 66.9 per cent in 2015.

Since 2015, offer rates by Scottish providers to English and Northern Irish applicants have been higher than offer rates to Scottish applicants. This contrasts to the period between 2008 and 2011, when applications from Scottish applicants were more likely to receive an offer than applications from English and Northern Irish applicants. In 2016, applications from English and Northern Irish applicants were around 15 per cent more likely to receive an offer than applications from Scottish applicants.

Figure 34 Offer rate (application level) from Scottish providers to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants from England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland



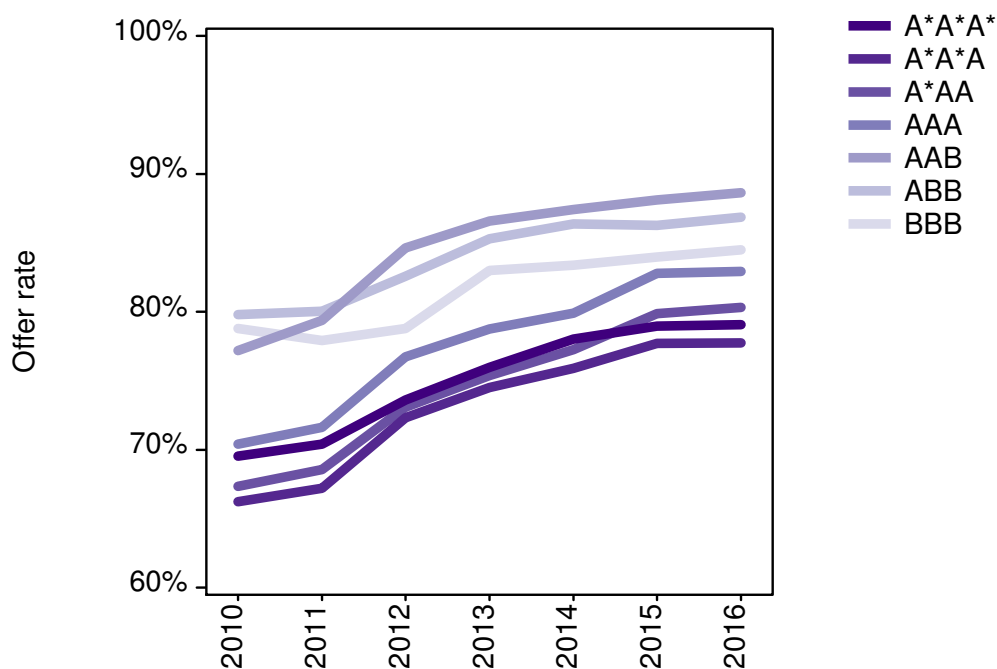
Small increase in offer rates for most predicted A level grade profiles in 2016

For 18 year old applicants who apply with A level results pending, it is possible to investigate offer rates by the profile of three highest predicted A level grades. This reflects the information available to the provider at the time the offer is made. Figure 35 shows the offer rates to applications from English 18 year old applicants across some of the most common predicted grade profiles.

The rank order of the level of offer-making to applicants holding each of these profiles is complex, reflecting both provider decisions and the applicant choice of course. For example, the offer rate to applications from applicants predicted AAB is higher than for those predicted BBB. But when applicants are predicted one or more A* grades, the offer rate goes down again, reflecting the different types of courses applied to.

There was a relatively narrow range of offer rates across these grade profiles, ranging (in 2016) from 77.8 per cent for A*A*A to 88.6 per cent for AAB. The offer rates to applications from all selected grade profiles increased from 2012 to 2014, and increased again in 2015 (with the exception of those predicted ABB). In the 2016 cycle, applications from those predicted BBB to AAB, and those predicted A*AA increased the most, between 0.5 and 0.6 percentage points, while the offer rate for those predicted AAA, A*A*A, and A*A*A* increased by just 0.1 percentage points.

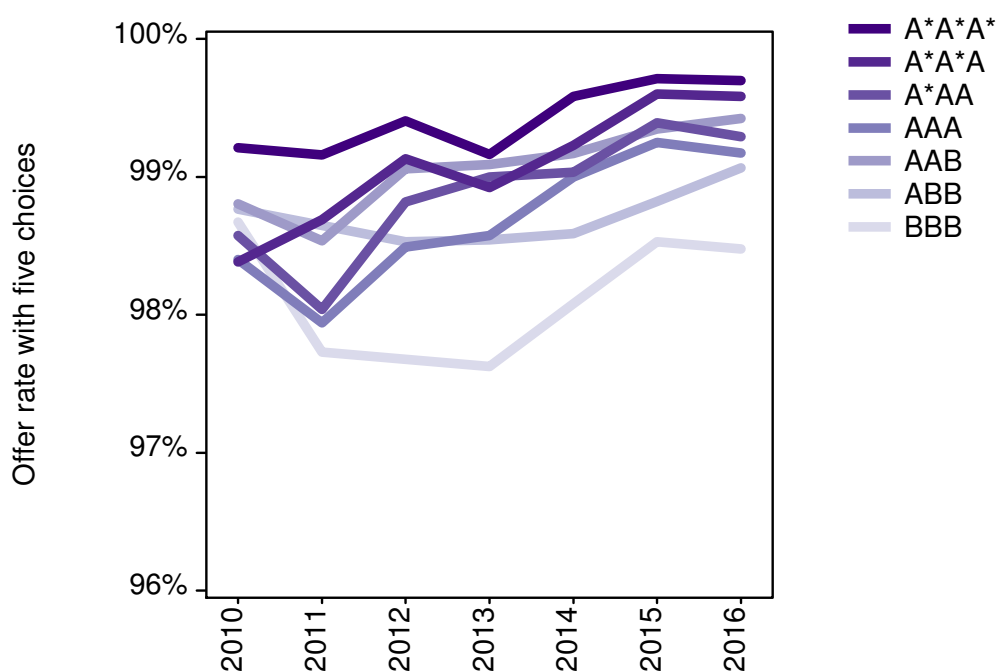
Figure 35 Offer rate (application level) to 18 year old English domiciled main scheme applicants by selected predicted grade profile of applicant



Across a wide range of predicted grade profiles, over 98 per cent of young applicants who made five choices received an offer

Most 18 year old English applicants with three predicted grades at A level will make five applications. The proportion of these applicants who received offers was very high across common grade profiles, ranging from 98.5 per cent of those predicted BBB to 99.7 per cent of those predicted A*A*A*. There were very slight changes in the proportions in 2016, the largest being a 0.2 per cent increase in applicants predicted ABB, which reached 99.1 per cent.

Figure 36 Proportion of 18 year old English domiciled main scheme applicants who receive at least one offer (from five choices) by predicted grade profile of applicant



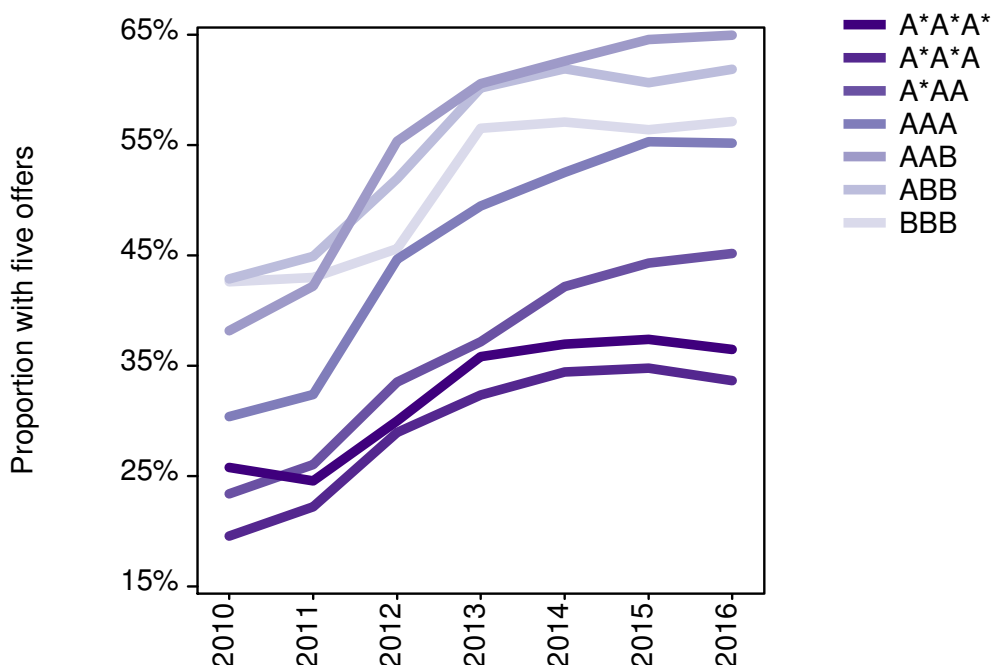
Between one and two thirds of applicants receive five offers, depending on predicted grades

Many 18 year old applicants who apply to five choices with three predicted A level grades will get offers from all five of their applications. In 2016, the proportion getting five offers ranged from 33.6 per cent of those predicted A*A*A to 65.0 per cent of those predicted AAB.

In 2016, for applicants predicted between BBB and AAB, or predicted A*AA, the probability of getting five offers was higher than in the previous cycle. Applicants predicted these grades were proportionally 1 to 2 per cent more likely to receive five offers than in 2015. The probability of applicants predicted AAA getting five offers was around the same in 2016 as in 2015. Applicants predicted A*A*A were 3 per cent less likely to receive five offers in 2016, compared to 2015, while those predicted A*A*A* were 2 per cent less likely.

Between the 2011 and 2016 cycles, the proportion of applicants with predicted grade profiles of AAB and above getting five offers increased by around a half. Over the same period, the proportion of applicants with predicted grade profiles of ABB and BBB getting five offers increased by around a third.

Figure 37 Proportion of 18 year old English domiciled main scheme applicants who receive offers to each of their five choices by predicted grade profile of applicant



Acceptance routes

Record numbers accepted through firm choice

There are a number of different acceptance routes in the admissions cycle. Figure 38 shows the number of acceptances by acceptance route using a logarithmic scale, so that the proportional changes can be seen more clearly across the large differences in numbers accepted through the various routes.

Most acceptances, over 70 per cent, are from the applicant selecting an offer as their firm choice and then satisfying any conditions attached to that offer. In 2016, firm choice continued to be the most likely route of acceptance and the numbers accepted by this route increased by 2,200 (+0.6 per cent proportionally) to 386,300, the highest number of acceptances recorded through this route to date.

Number accepted through insurance choice and Extra unchanged in 2016

Acceptances through an insurance choice (for applicants who do not satisfy the conditions of their firm offer) increased at a faster rate than acceptances through a firm choice between 2006 and 2011, and then fell substantially in 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of acceptances through this route increased each year, and again by more proportionally than the acceptances to the firm route. In 2016 however, the number of acceptances through an insurance choice remained constant at 39,500, accounting for 7.4 per cent of all acceptances that year.

Applicants who do not receive any offers from their five main scheme choices, or decline any offers they do receive, are eligible to make choices through the Extra process. Acceptances through Extra increased in each cycle between 2006 and 2011, then fell substantially in 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, there were small decreases in the number of these acceptances. In 2016, the number of acceptances through the Extra route was 7,500, unchanged from 2015, and accounting for 1.4 per cent of all acceptances.

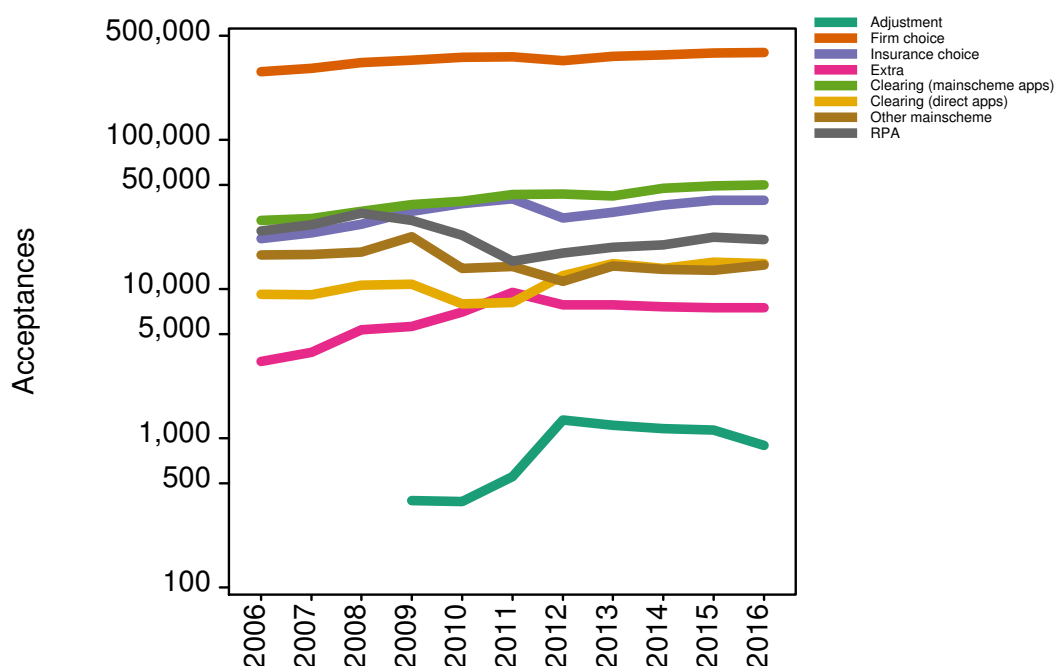
Record number accepted through Clearing (from direct and main scheme)

There are two routes for Clearing: an applicant may have been unsuccessful in the main scheme and then found a place in the Clearing process, or an applicant may have applied directly to the Clearing process. Acceptances through the Clearing process for those who were unsuccessful in the main scheme increased in 2016 to 50,000 (+900, +1.8 per cent proportionally), the highest recorded level. In 2016, the number of applicants accepted by applying directly to the Clearing process fell to 14,900 (-400, -2.4 per cent proportionally). The total placed through both Clearing routes was 64,900, an increase of 500 (+0.8 per cent proportionally) from 2015, and the highest number ever placed through the Clearing routes. In 2016, 12.1 per cent of acceptances were through Clearing.

Number accepted through Adjustment continues to fall

The Adjustment route (where applicants can 'adjust' to a place at another provider if they meet and exceed the conditions of their firm choice) was used by 900 acceptances in 2016, down by a fifth (-200, -21.3 per cent proportionally) and still a very small share of acceptances.

Figure 38 Acceptances by acceptance route (logarithmic scale)



UK 18 year olds: record numbers of firm and main scheme Clearing accepts

The profile of acceptance routes varies across age and domicile groups. Figure 39 shows the trends in the number of UK 18 year olds entering by acceptance route.

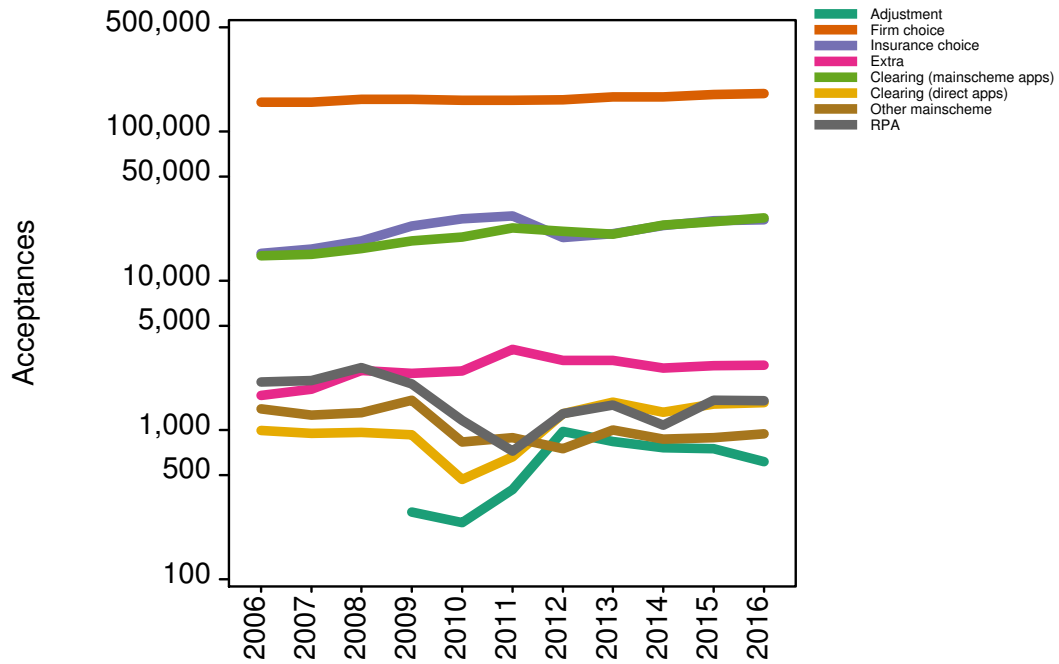
Acceptances through the firm choice route dominate (179,500, 75 per cent of all acceptances) and increased slightly in 2016 (+1,600, +0.9 per cent proportionally). The number accepted through their insurance choice was 25,600 in 2016, an increase on 2015 of 400, +1.5 per cent proportionally.

The number accepted through Clearing after applying in the main scheme increased by 1,700 (+6.7 per cent proportionally) to 26,500, the highest recorded. Applying and being accepted direct to Clearing is a less frequently used route for this group of applicants, and has remained constant at 1,500.

In 2016, the number of UK 18 year olds accepted through Extra was 2,700, which remains unchanged from 2015.

Adjustment usage fell in 2016 with 600 (-100, -18 per cent proportionally) UK 18 year olds placed through this route.

Figure 39 UK domiciled 18 year old acceptances by acceptance route (logarithmic scale)



Entry rates by background

Entry rates for 18 year olds can differ across various dimensions, specifically sex, ethnic group, where people live (using the POLAR3 classification), secondary education school sector (state or private), and income background (as measured by whether a person was in receipt of free school meals (FSM), a means-tested benefit while at school). Statistical methods can be used that consider differences across all of these characteristics simultaneously to provide an overall measure of the difference in entry rates. This is important because there is a wide variation in entry rates across combinations of these groups (see UCAS Undergraduate End of Cycle Report 2015). Entry rates are used in these calculations because they directly measure the level of representation of different groups in HE, allowing the identification of those who are 'disadvantaged' in terms of their entry rate to university.

Combining multiple equality dimensions into a single equality measure

Using statistical modelling techniques and a linked data set of pupils in English schools (including those in independent schools) who were aged 18 between 2006 and 2010 (source: National Pupil Database and School Census, Department for Education), a range of equality dimensions (sex, ethnic group, POLAR3, secondary education sector type, and FSM status¹) are combined to create an equality measure, which can then be estimated for pupils who were aged 18 in later years.

The methods used seek to predict whether an individual enters higher education or not when aged 18, using only the equality characteristics and their interactions with each other. The resulting predicted entry probability, termed the multiple equality measure (abbreviated to MEM), is based on 2006 to 2010 data, and is used to aggregate pupils into groups, where group 1 contains those least likely to enter higher education ('most disadvantaged' in this context), and group 5 contains those most likely to enter higher education ('most advantaged' in this context). Entry rates can then be calculated for each group and the trend assessed between groups across time.

The way in which the multiple equality measure groups are formed means that within a group, there is a mixture of people from different backgrounds and with different characteristics. For example, 64 per cent of young people in MEM group 1 were from POLAR3 Q1 (most disadvantaged) areas, and 4 per cent were from Q5 (most advantaged) areas. Similarly, 59 per cent of people in MEM group 1 were pupils previously in receipt of free school meals, 74 per cent were men, and 91 per cent were from the White ethnic group.

¹ The National Pupil Database and School Census only records the ethnic group and geographical information (from which POLAR3 quintile is derived) of pupils in state schools. Pupils in independent schools, who have high entry rates, were assigned to have a separate ethnic group and POLAR3 quintile outside of the normal groupings.

In contrast, just 0.3 per cent of young people in MEM group 5 are from POLAR3 Q1 areas, 0.8 per cent were FSM pupils, 26 per cent were men, and 36 per cent were from the White ethnic group.

Despite the different backgrounds and characteristics among those in a MEM group, the groups are constructed such that the combinations of characteristics in the same group have broadly similar chances of entering to HE aged 18. This is reflected in the overrepresentation, relative to the population, of characteristics associated with lower HE applications rates in MEM group 1 (POLAR3 Q1, men, FSM pupils, and the White ethnic group), and higher HE application rates in MEM group 5 (POLAR3 Q5, women, non-FSM pupils, and the Asian and Chinese ethnic groups).

A full breakdown of the composition of each MEM group is available in the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer on the UCAS website.

Entry rates for each MEM group increase to highest recorded values in 2016, but smallest increase for the most disadvantaged group

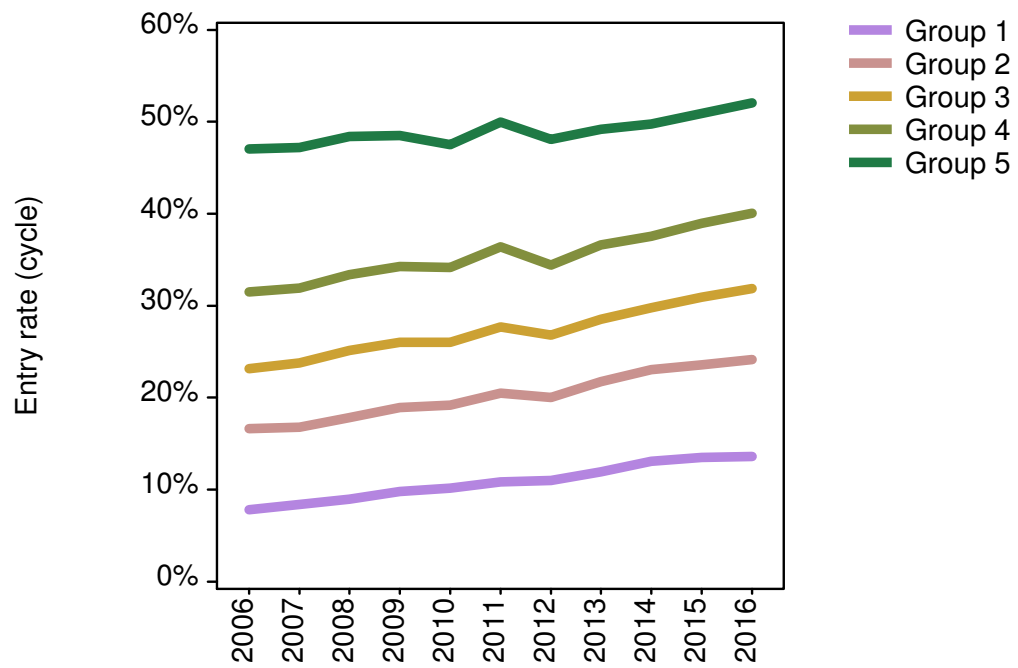
The entry rates for each MEM group are shown in Figure 40. In 2016, entry rates increased for all MEM groups to reach their highest recorded values. The increase in 2016 was smallest for group 1 (most disadvantaged), and largest for group 5 (most advantaged).

The entry rate in 2016 for MEM group 1 was 13.6 per cent, an increase of 0.1 percentage points (1 per cent proportionally), the smallest increase in entry rates for this group across the period. For group 2, the entry rate was 24.1 per cent (+0.6 percentage points, 3 per cent proportionally), while for group 3, it was 31.9 per cent (+0.9 percentage points, 3 per cent proportionally), and for MEM group 4, it was 40.0 per cent (+1.1 percentage points, 3 per cent proportionally). The entry rate for MEM group 5, the most advantaged group, was 52.1 per cent (+1.2 percentage points, 2 per cent proportionally).

Entry rates have increased across the period, with the largest proportional increase between 2006 and 2016 for MEM group 1. For this group, the entry rate increased by 74 per cent proportionally (+5.8 percentage points), compared to 45 per cent for group 2 (+7.5 percentage points), 38 per cent for group 3 (+8.7 percentage points), 27 per cent for group 4 (+8.5 percentage points), and 11 per cent for group 5 (+5.1 percentage points).

Entry rates for each MEM group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

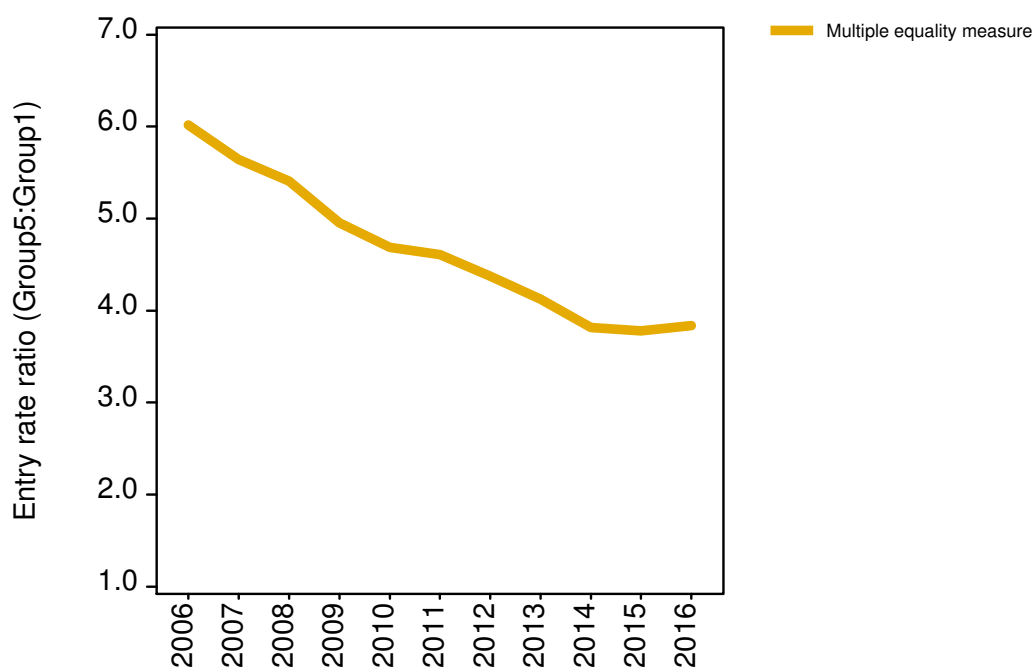
Figure 40 Entry rates for English 18 year olds by multiple equality measure groups (group 5 = most likely to enter to HE)



Entry rate ratio for the most advantaged to most disadvantaged multiple equality measure groups has remained stable since 2014

Figure 41 shows the ratio of 18 year old entry rates for MEM group 5 to MEM group 1. In 2006, this entry rate ratio was 6.0, meaning the most advantaged 18 year olds, according to the MEM, were six times more likely to enter than the most disadvantaged. The ratio decreased in each of the subsequent eight years to reach 3.8 in 2014, meaning that entry rates between the most advantaged and disadvantaged areas became more equal on this measure. The ratio remained at 3.8 in 2015 (the first time it had not fallen since 2006) and again in 2016.

Figure 41 18 year old entry rate ratio: Multiple equality measure groups (group 5:group 1)



Entry rates to higher tariff providers for those least likely to enter HE are 57 per cent higher than ten years ago

Figure 42 shows the entry rates to higher tariff providers for each multiple equality measure group. Due to the large range across the groups, entry rates are plotted on a logarithmic scale (to show the proportional changes more clearly). There is a marked progression from lower to higher entry rates across the disadvantaged to advantaged groups that is maintained throughout the period. This is characterised by each group being between 50 and 140 per cent more likely to be accepted to higher tariff providers than the preceding (more disadvantaged) group.

In 2016, 2.3 per cent of 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged MEM group (those least likely to enter to HE) entered a higher tariff provider. This is an increase of 0.1 percentage points (+5 per cent proportionally) on 2015, and 0.8 percentage points (+57 per cent proportionally) higher than in 2006.

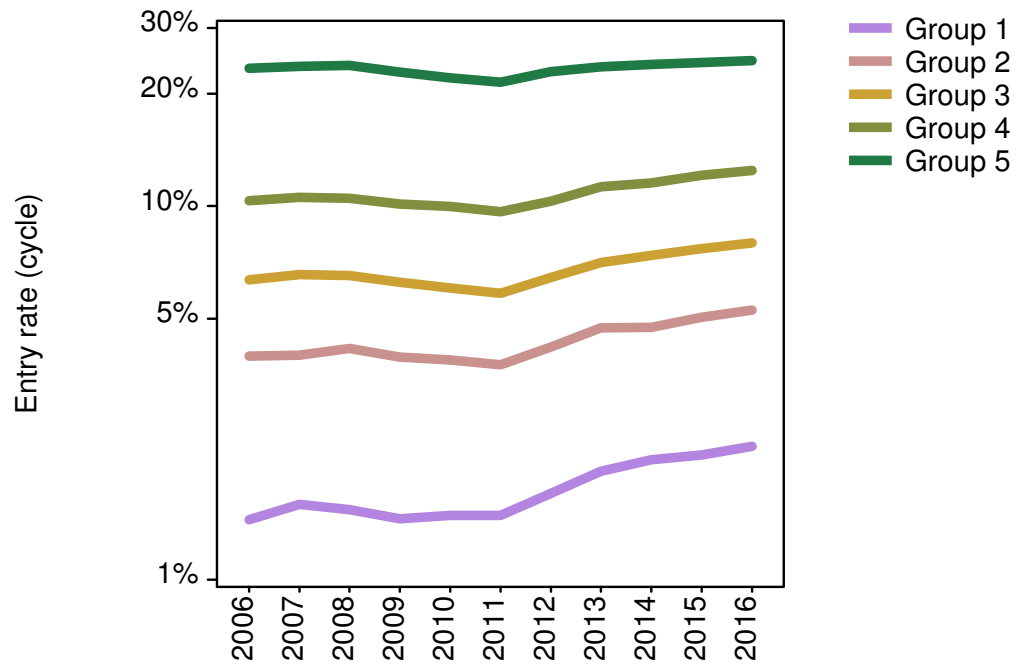
The entry rate for MEM group 2 to higher tariff providers in 2016 was 5.3 per cent, for MEM group 3 it was 8.0 per cent, and for MEM group 4 it was 12.4 per cent. These rates were between 3 to 5 per cent higher than they were in 2015, and between 20 and 30 per cent higher than they were in 2006.

18 year olds from the most advantaged MEM group (those most likely to enter to HE) had an entry rate of 24.5 per cent in 2016, an increase of 0.2 percentage points (+1 per cent proportionally) on 2015, and 1.1 percentage points (+5 per cent proportionally) on 2006.

These patterns in entry rates mean that 18 year olds from the most advantaged MEM group were over ten and a half times more likely to enter a higher tariff provider than 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged MEM group, down from being 16 times more likely in 2006. These ratios are higher than those found when the groups are based on POLAR3 alone, as the additional characteristics used in the MEM groups permit a greater separation of advantaged and disadvantaged groups in this regard.

Entry rates for each MEM group to higher tariff providers can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 42 Entry rates for English 18 year olds by multiple equality measure groups to higher tariff providers (logarithmic scale)



Entry rates to medium tariff providers increase in 2016 across all multiple equality measure groups

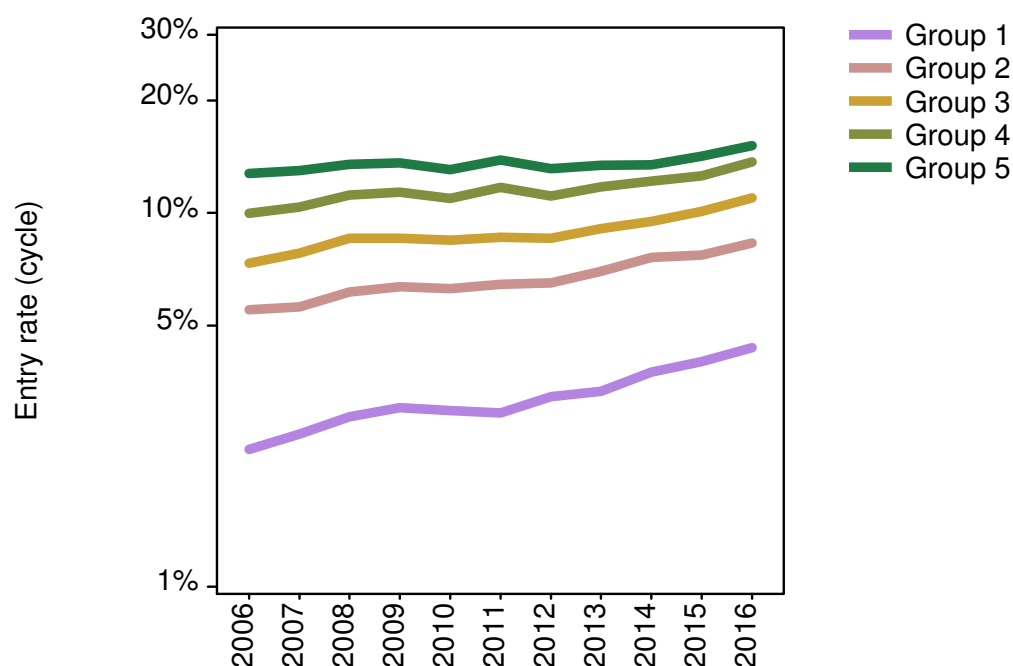
Since 2006, entry rates for all multiple equality measure groups have increased. In 2016, 4.4 per cent of 18 year olds in MEM group 1 entered a medium tariff provider, an increase of 0.4 percentage points (+9 per cent proportionally) on 2015. For 18 year olds in MEM group 5, the entry rate was 15.2 per cent in 2016, an increase of 1.0 percentage point (+7 per cent proportionally) on 2015.

These patterns in entry rates mean that 18 year olds from the most advantaged MEM group were three and half times more likely to enter a medium tariff provider than 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged MEM group. This has fallen from being five and a half times more likely at the start of the period in 2006.

Entry rates in 2016 were 8.3 per cent for MEM group 2, 11.0 per cent for MEM group 3, and 13.7 per cent for MEM group 4, between 0.6 and 1.1 percentage points (+8 to +9 per cent proportionally) higher than in 2015. In 2016, the entry rate for MEM group 2 was almost double (91 per cent proportionally) the entry rate for MEM group 1. This is larger than, for example, the proportional difference in entry rates between MEM group 5 and MEM group 2 (82 per cent).

Entry rates to medium tariff providers for MEM groups can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates data explorer on the UCAS website.

Figure 43 Entry rates for English 18 year olds by multiple equality measure groups to medium tariff providers (logarithmic scale)



Entry rates to lower tariff providers fall across all multiple equality measure groups for the first time since 2012

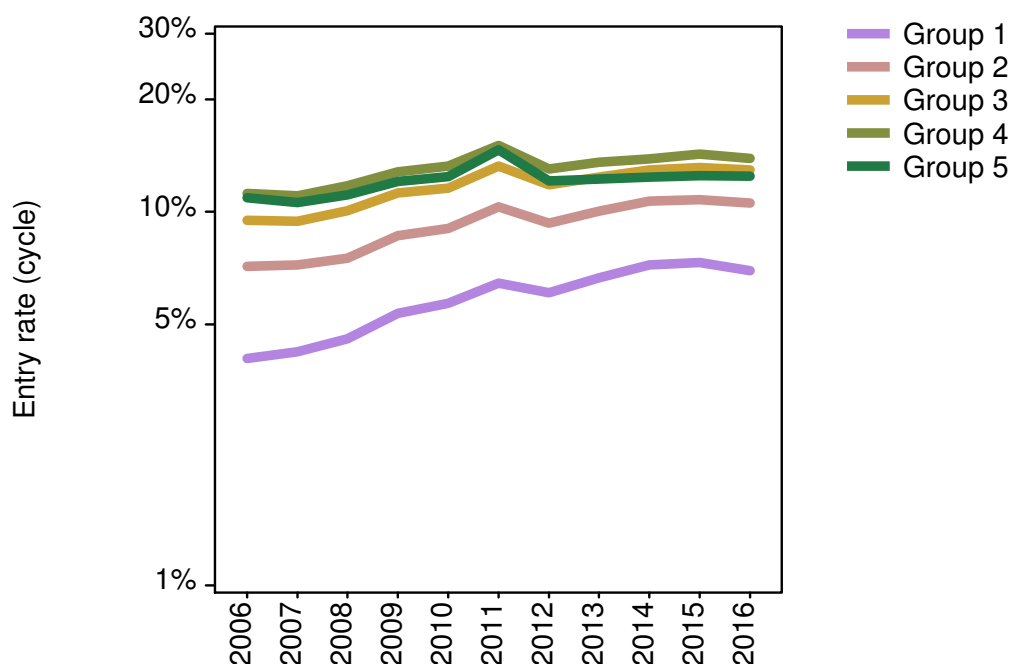
Entry rates to lower tariff providers across the multiple equality measure groups are closer together than they are for higher and medium tariff providers. In 2016, the entry rate for MEM group 1 was 6.9 per cent, the lowest of all the groups. For MEM group 2, the entry rate in 2016 was 10.6 per cent, for MEM group 3 it was 13.0 per cent, for group 4 it was 13.9 per cent (the highest of all the groups), and for MEM group 5 the entry rate was 12.4 per cent.

These patterns in entry rates mean that in 2016, 18 year olds from the most advantaged MEM group were over one and half times more likely to enter a lower tariff provider than 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged MEM group.

Entry rates to lower tariff providers have increased since 2006 for all MEM groups, by 72 per cent for group 1 (the largest proportional increase of all the groups), and by 14 per cent for group 5 (the smallest proportional increase of all the groups). In 2016, the entry rates decreased for all MEM groups, by between 5 per cent proportionally (group 1), and 0.4 per cent proportionally (group 5).

Entry rates for each MEM group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 44 Entry rates for English 18 year olds by multiple equality measure groups to lower tariff providers (logarithmic scale)



Entry rates for single equality dimensions

The multiple equality measure statistics give an overall picture of the differences and trends in entry rates across the young population. The levels and trends in the entry rates are reported below for each of the equality dimensions used to create the multiple equality measure. These trends help to understand the relationship between each equality dimension, and the patterns in entry rates across the groups formed from the multiple equality measure.

18 year old women over a third more likely to enter higher education than men

In 2016, around 37 per cent of the UK 18 year old population applied to higher education through UCAS, and around 32 per cent were accepted for entry. These national rates were a mixture of different rates for men and women. Figure 45 shows the application rates and entry rates for UK domiciled 18 year old men and women.

The application rate for women was substantially higher than that for men for the whole period. Despite increases in the application rate for men since 2006, the application rate for men in 2016 (31.9 per cent) remained below the level for women ten years previously in 2006 (33.3 per cent). For both men and women, the application rate increased in 2016 (2.8 per cent proportionally for men, 2.9 per cent for women). In 2016, as in most of the more recent cycles, 18 year old women were around a third more likely (36 per cent proportionally) to apply than 18 year old men, but the percentage point difference widened for a third successive year in 2016 to 11.5 percentage points.

The entry rate for women was considerably higher than the entry rate for men across the whole period. For 18 year olds in 2016, the entry rate increased (3.7 per cent proportionally for men, 3.8 per cent for women) to the highest recorded levels for both men (27.2 per cent) and women (36.8 per cent). As with application rates, 18 year old women were around a third (35 per cent) more likely to enter higher education than 18 year old men. The entry rate for women remains higher than the application rate for men.

The absolute difference in entry rates between men and women widened by 0.4 percentage points in 2016 to 9.6 percentage points – the largest difference recorded. The difference in 18 year old entry rates between men and women equates to 37,000 fewer 18 year old men entering higher education this year than would be the case if men had the same entry rate as women.

The overall UK 18 year old application and entry rates increased in 2016. The application rate in 2016 was 37.5 per cent, 1.0 percentage point higher than in 2015 (+3 per cent proportionally). The entry rate in 2016 was 31.9 per cent, an increase of 1.2 percentage points (+4 per cent proportionally) on 2015.

Entry rates by sex for 18 year olds from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales can be explored further in the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 45 UK domiciled 18 year old application and entry rates by sex

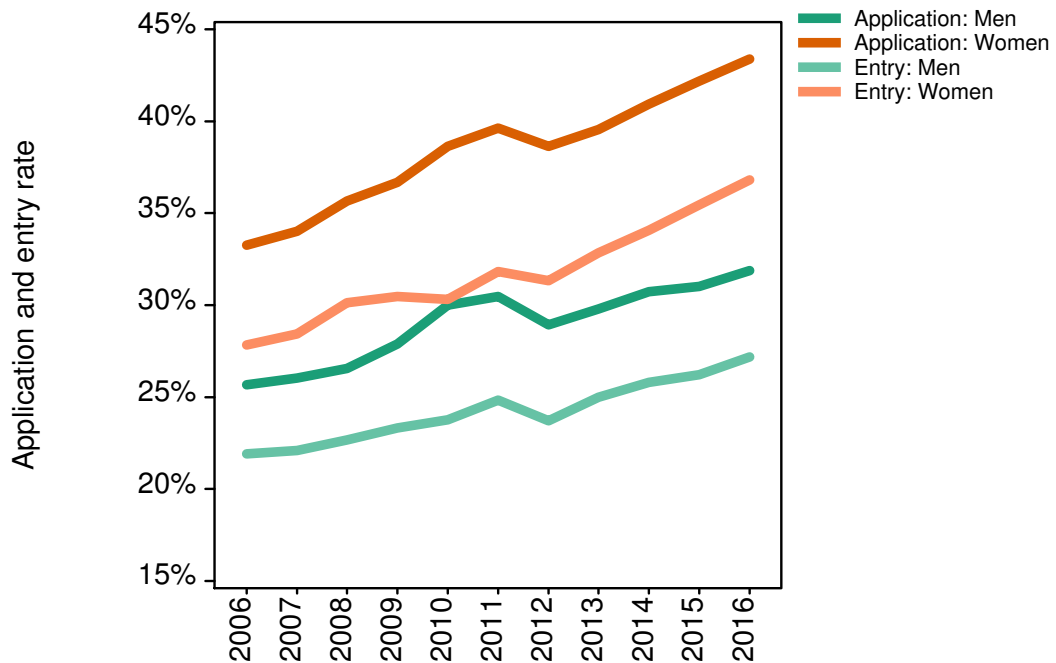
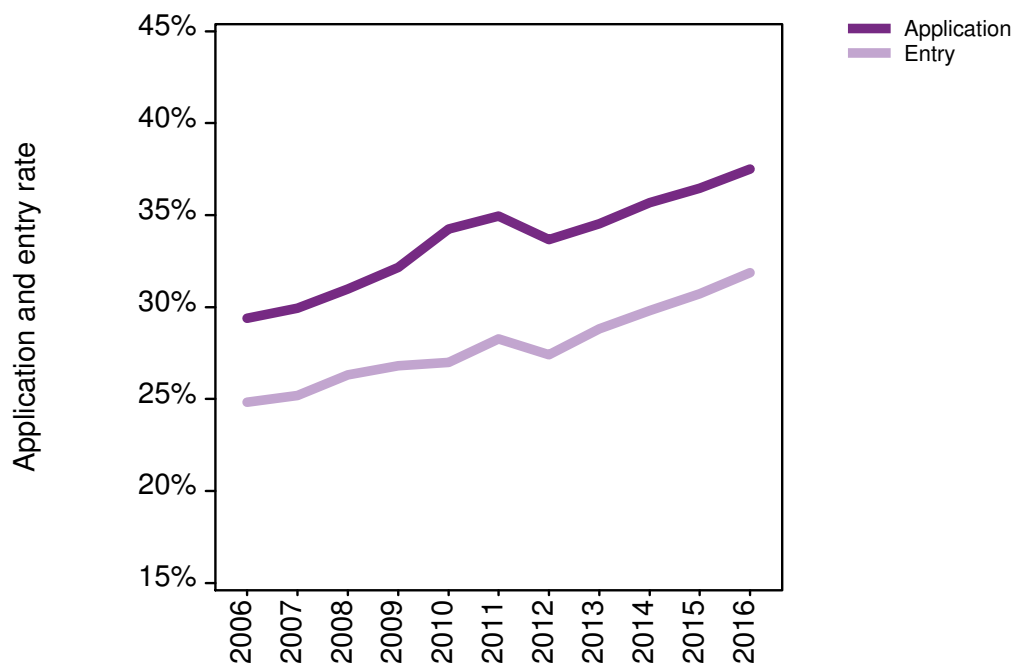


Figure 46 UK domiciled 18 year old application and entry rates



By age 19, 47 per cent of women have entered higher education, over 11 percentage points higher than men

Cohort application rates and cohort entry rates for UK domiciled young men and women are shown in Figure 47. These measures combine the proportion of the population that applied or were accepted for entry at age 18, with the proportion of the same population that applied or were accepted for entry at age 19 a year later. As such, they give a representation of the total proportion of a young cohort that has been accepted for entry into higher education by age 19. These rates have the drawback that they cannot yet be reported for the cohort that was aged 18 in 2015, since they have not yet had the opportunity to apply at age 19.

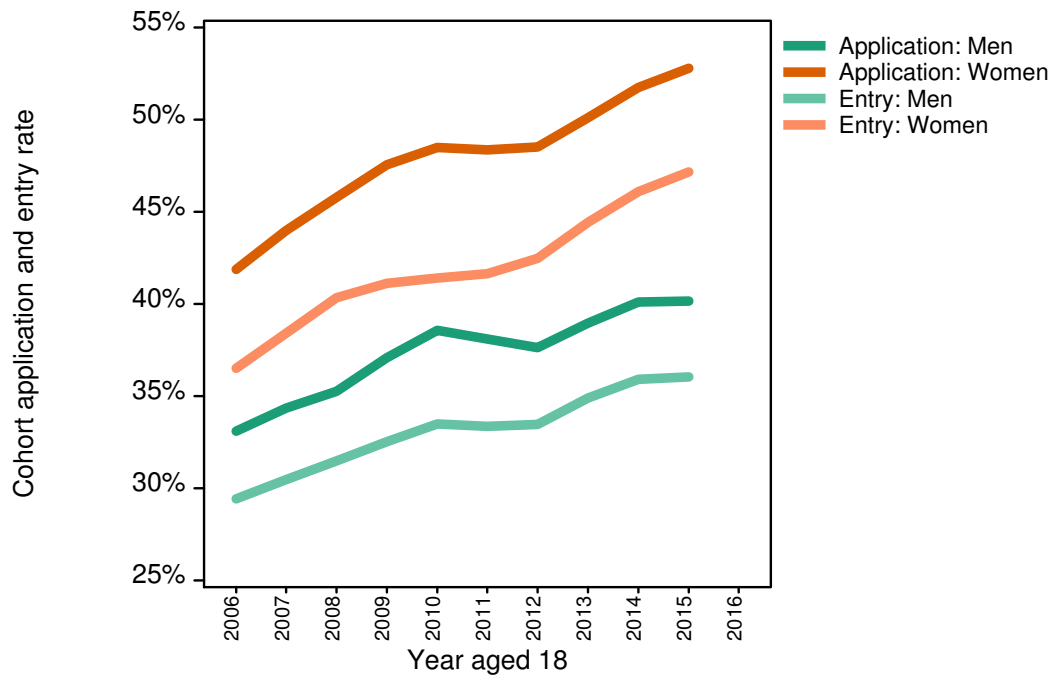
For the 2015 cohort (those who were 18 in 2015, and 19 in 2016), the cohort application rate for women was 52.8 per cent, compared to 40.2 per cent for men. The cohort entry rate was 47.2 per cent for women who were aged 18 in 2015, compared to 36.0 per cent for men.

Throughout this period, the application rate and entry rate for each cohort of young women was substantially higher than the application rate and entry rate for each cohort of young men. For the 2015 cohort, women were 31 per cent more likely to apply for higher education by age 19 than men, and 31 per cent more likely to be accepted to enter higher education by age 19.

For both women and men, the cohort application and entry rates have increased since 2006. The cohort of young women that was 18 in 2015 was around 26 per cent more likely to apply, and 29 per cent more likely to be accepted to enter higher education than the cohort that was 18 in 2006. For men, the cohort that was 18 in 2015 was around 21 per cent more likely to apply and 22 per cent more likely to be accepted than the cohort that was 18 in 2006.

For the 2015 cohort, application and entry rates increased for both sexes to their highest levels. The entry rate for women increased by 1.1 percentage points (2.3 per cent proportionally). Although the cohort entry rate for men increased, it did so by only 0.1 percentage points (0.3 per cent proportionally), a much smaller increase than for recent cohorts. These different patterns of increases for men and women mean that the difference in the cohort entry rates between men and women has increased to 11.1 percentage points, the largest recorded.

Figure 47 UK domiciled cohort application and entry rates by sex



Women becoming substantially more likely to enter higher tariff providers than men

Figure 48 shows the trend in the entry rate ratio for women to men (that is, how much more likely women are to enter HE than men) for higher, medium, and lower tariff providers. The entry rate ratios were greater than 1.0 for entry to all three provider tariff groups, showing that 18 year old women have been consistently more likely to enter all types of higher education than 18 year old men.

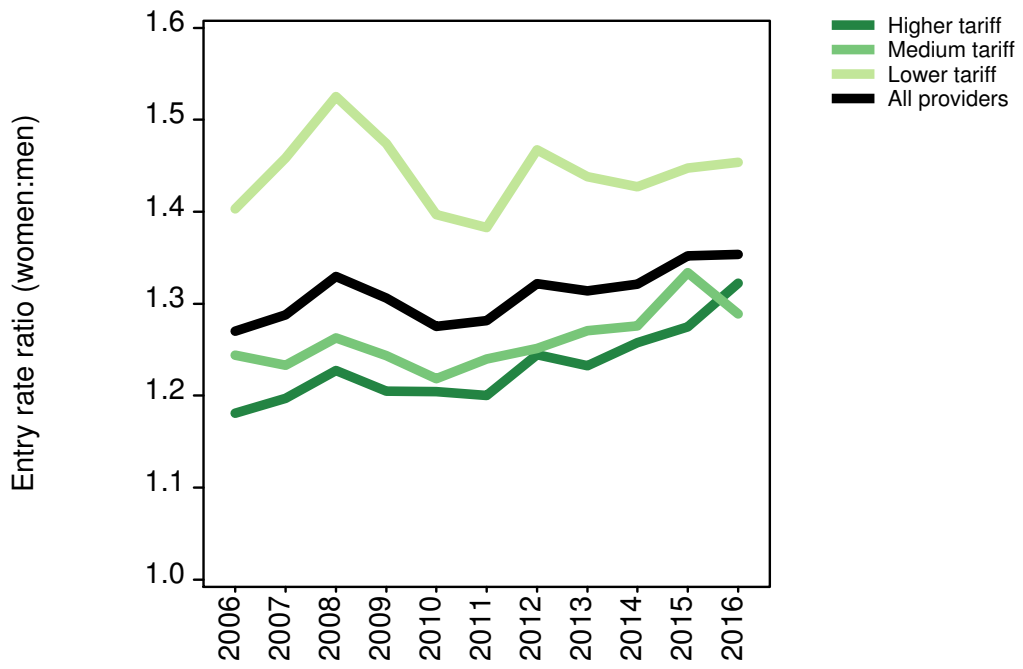
Over the last decade, the relative difference between men and women entering higher tariff providers increased. In 2006, women were 18 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff providers than men. By 2015, this had increased, so that women were 28 per cent more likely to enter than men. In 2016, the difference increased again, so women were 32 per cent more likely to enter than men, the highest relative difference in this period.

The entry rate ratio for medium tariff providers in 2016 was 1.3. That is, women were just under a third more likely to enter medium tariff providers than men. The entry rate ratio for medium tariff providers fell in 2016, reversing the increase in 2015 and taking the entry rate ratio for medium tariff providers below that of high tariff providers for the first time.

Lower tariff providers have had the greatest entry rate ratio between men and women for each cycle. The ratio has been relatively variable from cycle to cycle (compared to higher and medium tariff providers), but has been at least 1.4 in every year. In 2016, the entry rate ratio remained constant, with 18 year old UK women 45 per cent more likely to enter lower tariff providers than men.

Entry rates for UK 18 year olds to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers by sex can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 48 Ratio of UK 18 year old entry rate for women to the entry rate for men, by provider tariff group



Entry rates for disadvantaged 18 year olds increase in all UK countries

Figure 49 shows the proportion of the 18 year old population living in the most disadvantaged areas (POLAR3 Q1) that were accepted for entry, by country of domicile. The entry rates for Scotland will be lower than the total entry rates to higher education, since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS.

In 2016, the entry rates increased for England to 19.5 per cent (+1.0 percentage point, +5 per cent proportionally), for Scotland to 10.7 per cent (+0.2 percentage points, +2 per cent proportionally), for Northern Ireland to 16.0 per cent (+0.2 percentage points, +1 per cent proportionally), and for Wales to 18.2 per cent (+1.6 percentage points, +10 per cent proportionally). These increases continue the longer term trend of increasing entry rates for disadvantaged 18 year olds across the period, with entry rates increasing to the highest recorded values in each country, with the exception of Northern Ireland, where they are at their second highest recorded level.

Entry rates for disadvantaged 18 year olds increase by nearly a third in five years in England, and by nearly three quarters since 2006

In all countries, the entry rate for 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged areas increased over the period between 2006 and 2016. Compared with entry rates from five years ago, in 2011, 18 year olds from these disadvantaged areas were around 29 per cent (England), 18 per cent (Northern Ireland), and 35 per cent (Scotland and Wales) more likely to be accepted for entry in 2016.

Disadvantaged young people in England have become more likely to enter higher education in every cycle in the period. They are now around 73 per cent more likely to enter in 2016 than they were in 2006.

In 2016, disadvantaged young people in Northern Ireland were 31 per cent more likely to enter higher education than in 2006. In Wales, disadvantaged young people were 45 per cent more likely to enter than in 2006, while in Scotland, they were 57 per cent more likely to enter.

Entry rates for advantaged 18 year olds at similar levels to recent cycles

Figure 50 shows the entry rate of 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas (POLAR3 Q5) by country. The entry rates for Scotland will be lower than the total entry rates to higher education, since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS. The entry rates across all countries are generally three to four times higher than for the most disadvantaged group, but do not show the same pattern of increase over the period.

In England, the entry rate for 18 year olds living in advantaged areas increased to 46.3 per cent (+1.5 percentage points, 3.2 per cent proportionally) in 2016. In Wales, the entry rate increased to 46.4 per cent (+2.5 percentage points, 5.8 per cent proportionally) in 2016. The entry rate for 18 year olds living in advantaged areas also increased in Scotland, standing at 37.6 per cent (+0.9 percentage points, 2.5 per

cent proportionally) in 2016. In Northern Ireland, the entry rate remained constant in 2016 at 46.2 per cent, 0.5 percentage points higher than in 2006 (1 per cent proportionally).

18 year old entry rates by POLAR3 quintile and country can be explored further in the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 49 18 year old entry rates for disadvantaged areas (POLAR3 Q1) by country of domicile

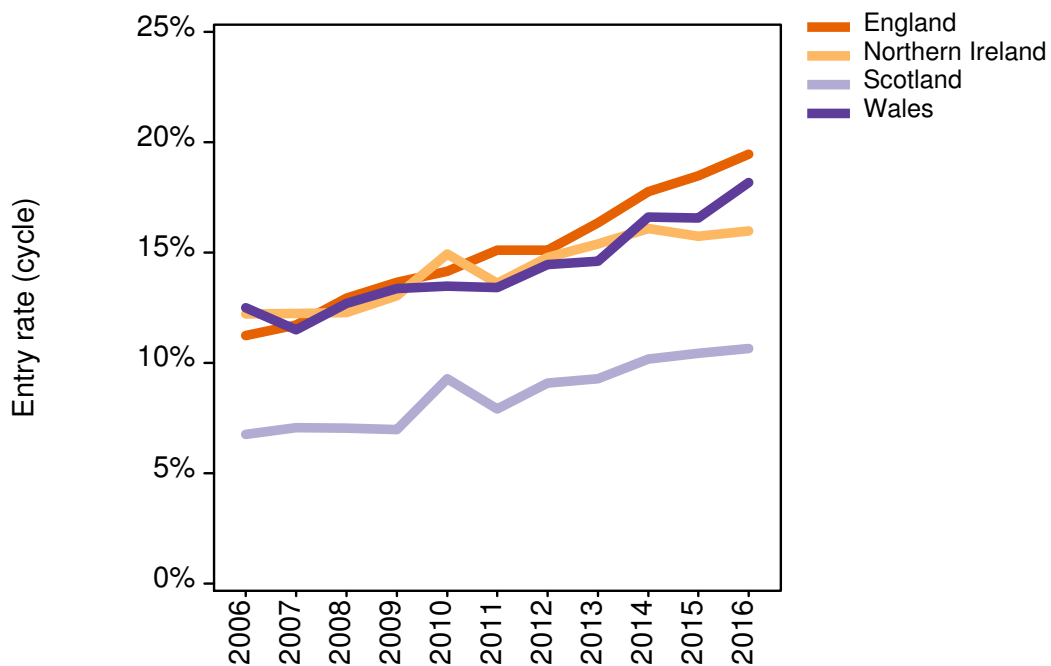
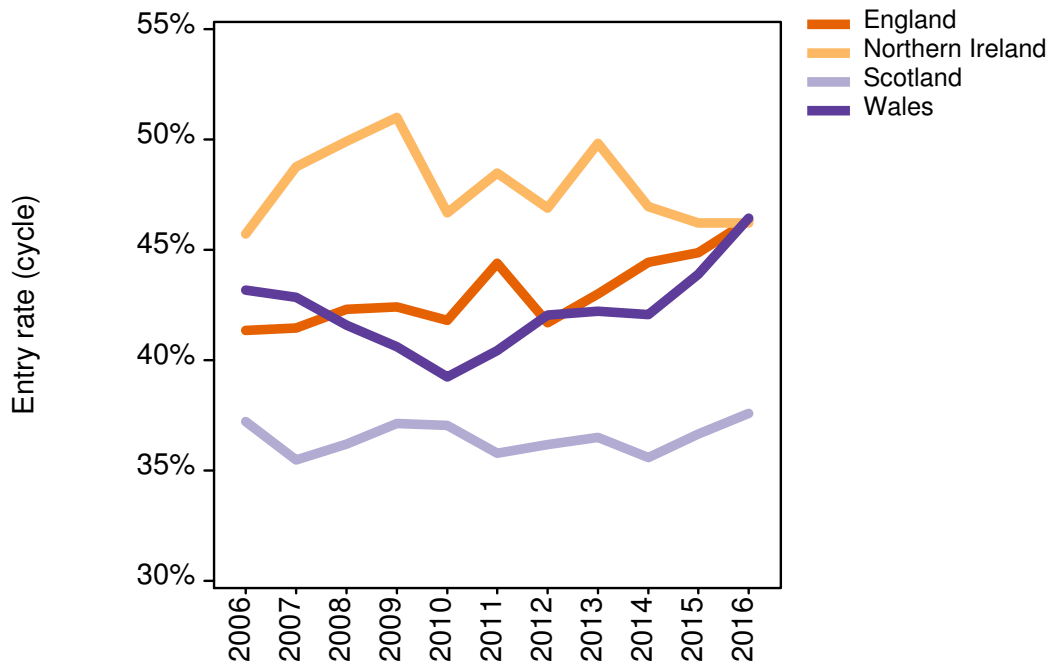


Figure 50 18 year old entry rates for advantaged areas (POLAR3 Q5) by country of domicile



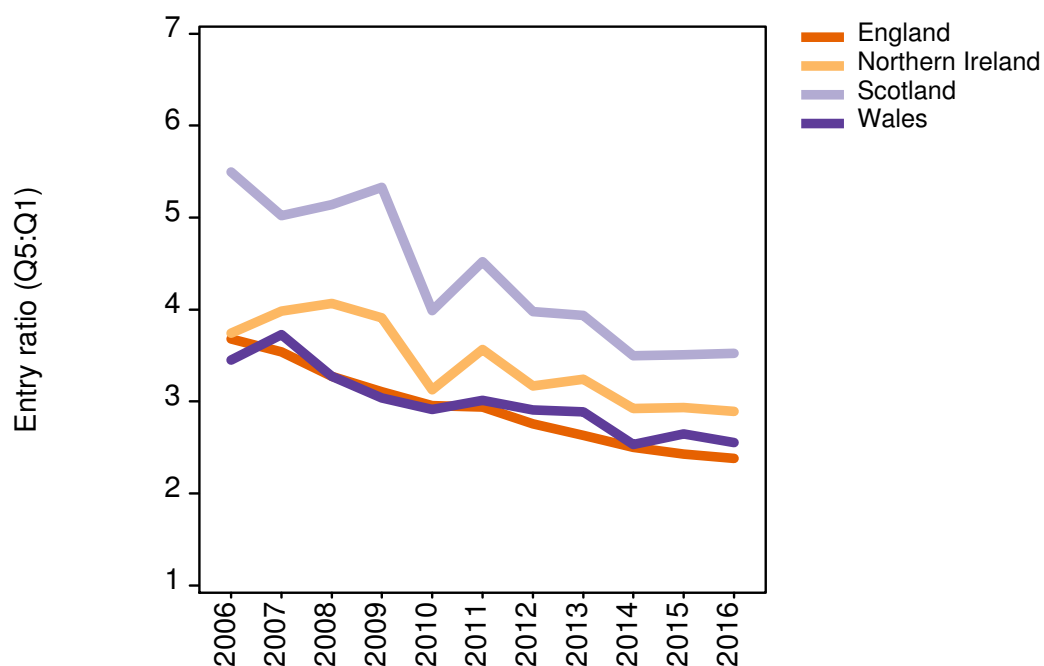
Entry rate differences by background unchanged in all UK countries

Figure 51 shows, for each country of the UK, relative differences in the entry rates of 18 year olds by background. It shows the entry rate ratio, quantifying how much more likely those in the most advantaged areas were to enter higher education than those in the most disadvantaged areas. That is, the entry rate from the most advantaged areas divided by the entry rate for the most disadvantaged areas. An entry rate ratio of 1.0 indicates equal chances of entering higher education for the two groups. Entry rate ratios greater than 1.0 indicate that 18 year olds from the most advantaged backgrounds are more likely to enter than those from the most disadvantaged areas – for example, an entry ratio of 2.5 means the advantaged group is two and half times more likely to enter than the disadvantaged group.

In all four countries, 18 year olds living in the most advantaged areas were much more likely to enter higher education than 18 year olds in the most disadvantaged areas. This relative difference decreased between 2006 and 2016. In 2016, the differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged areas remained broadly unchanged in England (2.4), Scotland (3.5), Northern Ireland (2.9) and Wales (2.6), since 2015. In 2006, the entry rate ratios were: England (3.7), Northern Ireland (3.7), Scotland (5.5) and Wales (3.5).

In each cycle, the entry rate ratio was greater for applicants domiciled in Scotland, though this difference reduced over the period. This may reflect that not all higher education admissions in Scotland are recorded through UCAS.

Figure 51 18 year old entry rate ratios: most advantaged areas (POLAR3 Q5) relative to most disadvantaged areas (POLAR3 Q1) by country of domicile



Highest recorded entry rates for English 18 year olds from all backgrounds

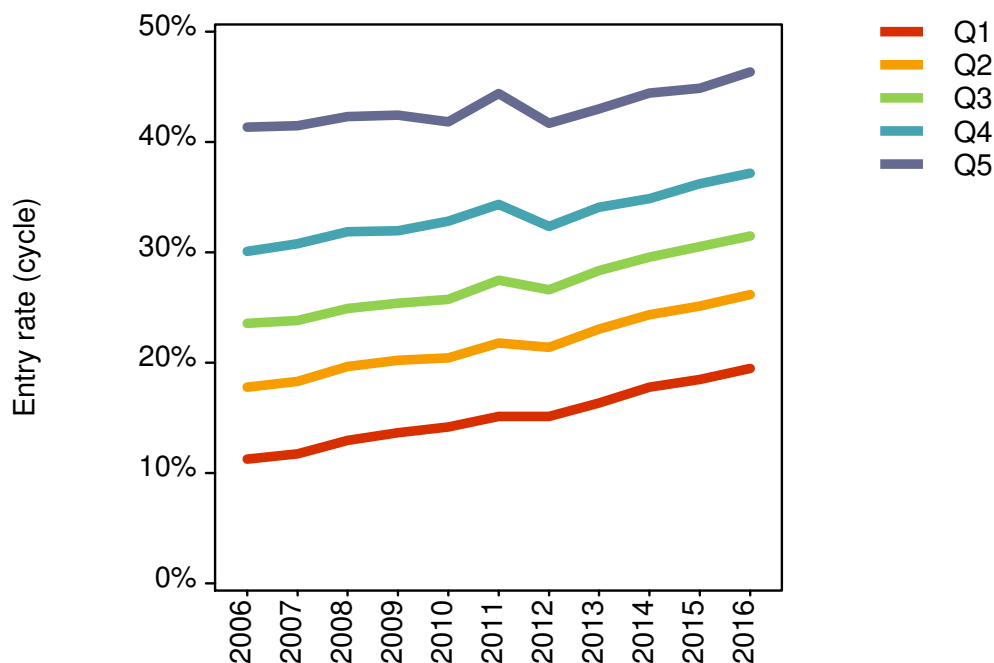
Figure 52 shows the entry rates for English 18 year olds by area-based background (POLAR3). There is a progression from lower to higher entry rates across the disadvantaged to advantaged groups that is maintained throughout the period. The entry rates for all groups increased across the period.

In the 2016 cycle, entry rates increased from 2015 in each of the groups. The most disadvantaged group (POLAR3 Q1) had the largest proportional increase of 5.3 per cent, compared to proportional increases of 3 to 4 per cent for the other groups. The most advantaged group (POLAR3 Q5) had the largest percentage point increase (1.5 percentage points), compared to +1 percentage point increases for the other groups.

The increase in entry rates for each group mean that the 2016 entry rate was the highest recorded for all groups. The entry rates in 2016 were 19.5 per cent in quintile 1 (Q1), 26.2 per cent in quintile 2 (Q2), 31.5 per cent in quintile 3 (Q3), 37.2 per cent in quintile 4 (Q4), and 46.3 per cent in quintile 5 (Q5).

Entry rates by POLAR3 quintile for 18 year olds in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 52 18 year olds in England, entry rates by POLAR3 groups (Q5 = advantaged)



Cohort entry rates increase to new highs for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

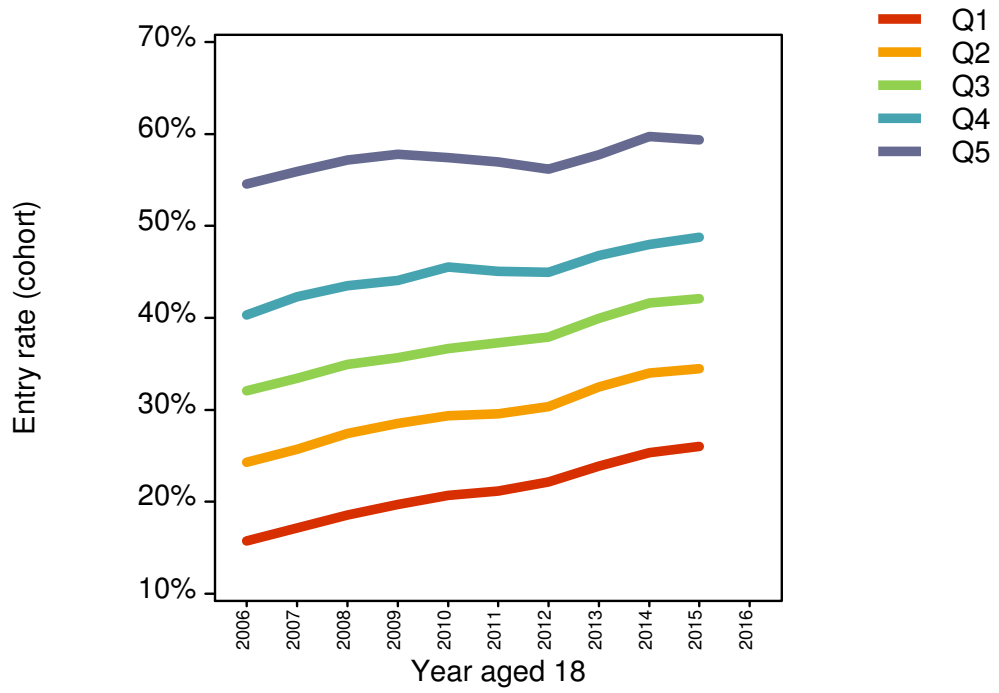
Figure 53 reports cohort entry rates for English young people by area-based background. This measure combines the proportion of the population accepted for entry at age 18 with the proportion of the same population accepted for entry at age 19, a year later. As such, it gives a representation of the total proportion of a young cohort that has been accepted for entry into higher education by age 19. It is therefore unaffected by people switching their age of entry between age 18 and age 19.

The entry rates are higher on this cohort measure than for entry at age 18 alone. For the young cohort that was aged 18 in 2015 and living in the most disadvantaged areas (POLAR3 Q1), 26.0 per cent were accepted for entry aged either 18 in 2015 or 19 in 2016. This is an increase of 0.7 percentage points (2.7 per cent proportionally) on the previous cohort (2014).

The cohort rate for those living in the most disadvantaged areas has increased by between half a percentage point and 2 percentage points each year, resulting in the entry rate for the 2015 cohort being 10.3 percentage points (65 per cent proportionally) higher than the 2006 cohort.

For 18 year olds in 2015 living in the most advantaged areas (POLAR3 Q5), 59.4 per cent – around three in every five young people – were accepted for entry aged either 18 in 2015 or 19 in 2016. This is a decrease (-0.4 percentage points, -0.7 per cent proportionally) in the cohort entry rate for this group on the previous cohort.

Figure 53 Young entry rate (cohort) in England by POLAR3 groups (Q5 = advantaged)



Entry rates to all types of provider increase for disadvantaged English 18 year olds

Figures 54 to 56 show the English 18 year old entry rates to each of the three provider tariff groups by area-based background (POLAR3). The uneven distribution of providers by tariff group across the UK, in combination with the relatively small number of entrants from different background groups, means that the large population bases in England provide the clearest way to look at trends by background and type of provider.

The difference in entry rates between backgrounds is greatest for the higher tariff providers and lowest for the lower tariff providers. The range in entry rates between the most disadvantaged and the most advantaged in 2016 is 4 per cent to 21 per cent for entry to higher tariff providers, and 6 per cent to 14 per cent for medium tariff providers. For lower tariff providers, entry rates from all backgrounds are in the narrow range of 10 to 13 per cent.

Entry rates to higher tariff providers by background span wide range

Figure 54 shows entry rates to higher tariff providers by background for the 18 year old population in England against a logarithmic axis (so the proportional changes are clearer). There is a marked progression from lower to higher entry rates across the disadvantaged to advantaged groups that is maintained throughout the period. This is characterised by each quintile group being between 40 and 97 per cent more likely to be accepted to higher tariff providers than the preceding (more disadvantaged) quintile group.

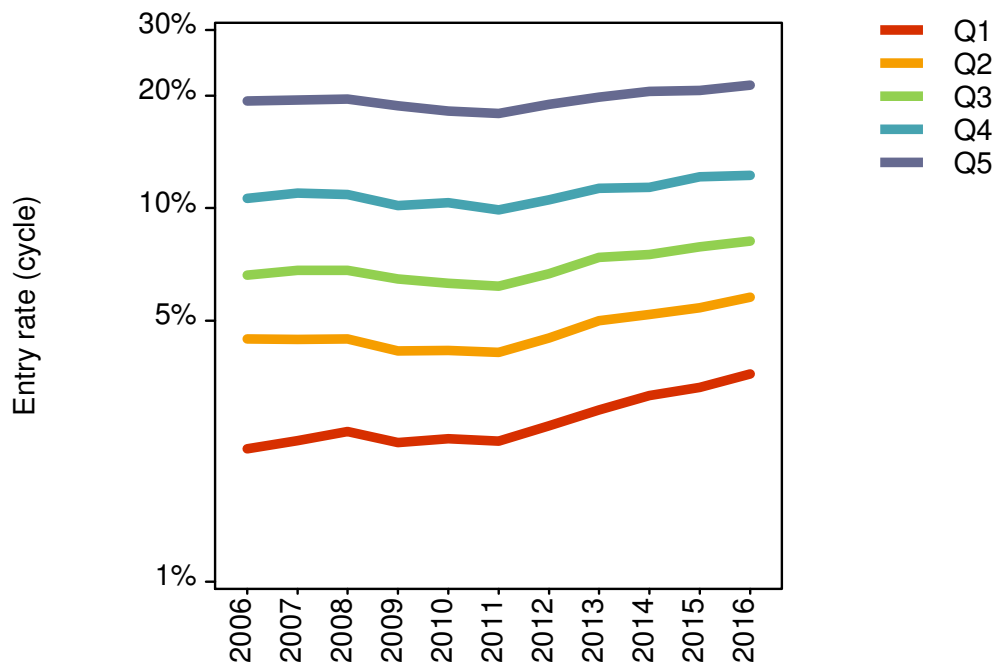
In 2016, the entry rate for applicants from the most disadvantaged areas (POLAR3 quintile 1) to higher tariff providers was 3.6 per cent. The entry rate for the most advantaged applicants (POLAR3 quintile 5) was 21.3 per cent. Entry rates increased for all groups in 2016. For the most disadvantaged, the entry rate increased by 0.3 percentage points (8.6 per cent proportionally). For the most advantaged group, the entry rate increased by 0.6 percentage points (3.1 per cent proportionally).

Since 2011, entry rates have increased from 2.4 per cent to 3.6 per cent for the most disadvantaged (1.2 percentage points, 51 per cent proportionally). For the most advantaged group, the increase has been from 17.9 per cent to 21.3 per cent (3.4 percentage points, 19 per cent proportionally).

These patterns in entry rates mean the most advantaged applicants were 5.9 times more likely to enter higher tariff providers than the most disadvantaged in 2016 – a decline from 8.5 times more likely in 2006, and down from 6.3 times more likely in 2015.

18 year old entry rates by POLAR3 quintile, country and tariff group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 54 English 18 year olds, entry rates to higher tariff providers by POLAR3 groups (logarithmic scale)



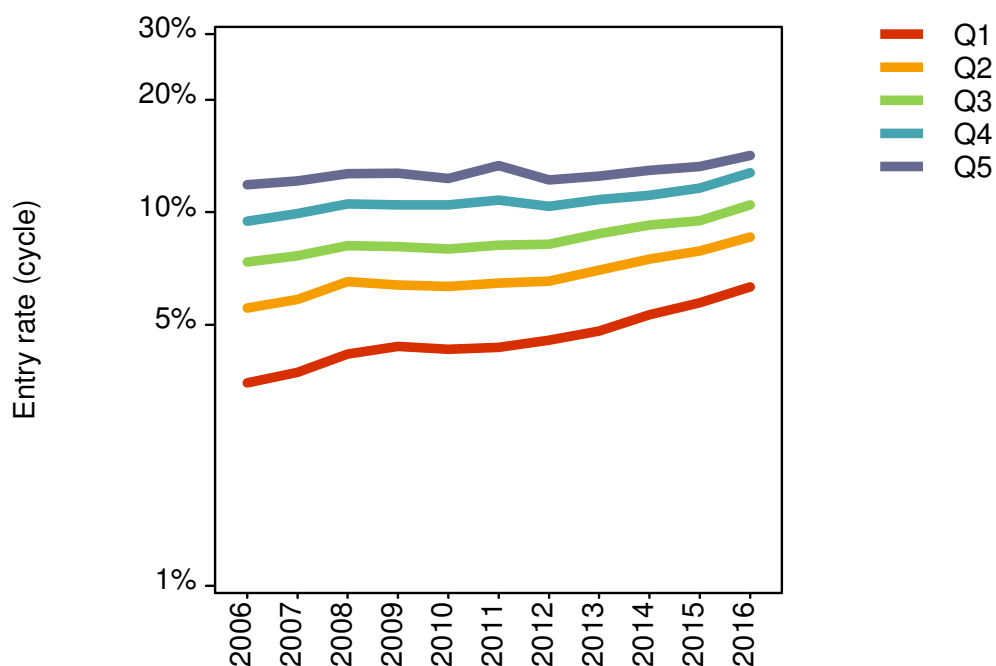
Entry rates to medium tariff providers increase from all backgrounds in 2016

Entry rates to medium tariff providers (Figure 55) have generally increased across the period in all areas, but there were greater increases in entry rates from the more disadvantaged areas.

The entry rate to medium tariff providers for English 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas was 14.2 per cent in 2016, while the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas was 6.3 per cent. This means the most advantaged applicants were 2.2 times more likely to enter medium tariff providers than the most disadvantaged in 2016 – a decline from 3.4 times more likely in 2006, and down from 2.3 times more likely in 2015.

18 year old entry rates by POLAR3 quintile, country and tariff group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 55 English 18 year olds, entry rates to medium tariff providers by POLAR3 groups (logarithmic scale)



Small and reducing difference in entry rates to lower tariff providers by background

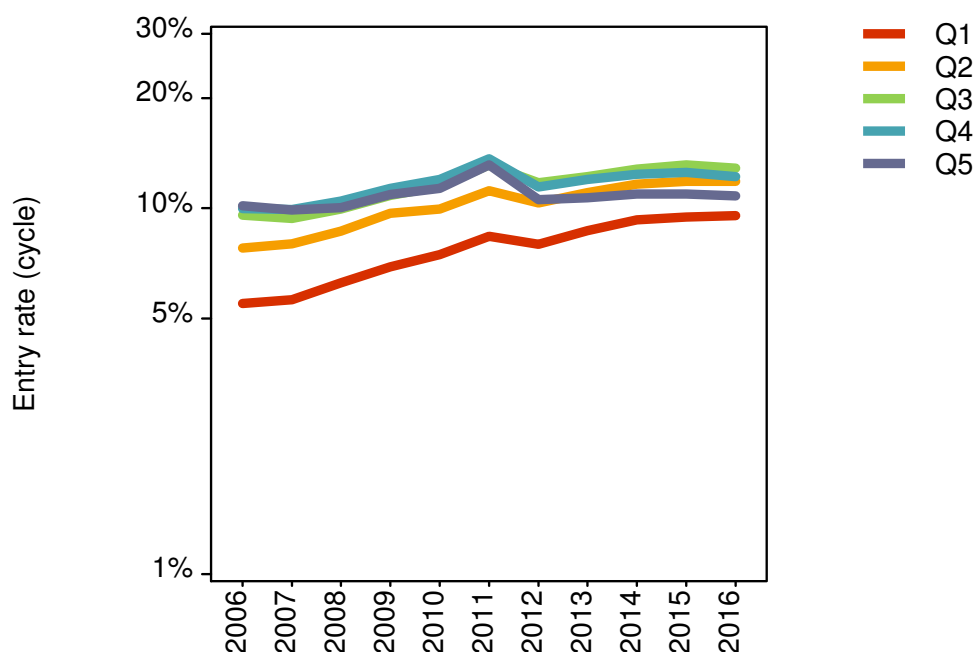
For entry to lower tariff providers (Figure 56), there is much less differentiation in entry rates by background compared to medium and higher tariff providers. In 2016, the entry rates from all backgrounds to lower tariff providers were within a 3.3 percentage point range, a decrease from 3.7 percentage points in 2015 (in 2006, the range was 4.7 percentage points).

In 2016, the 18 year old entry rates ranged from 9.6 per cent for those living in the most disadvantaged areas (POLAR3 Q1), to 12.9 per cent (for those living in POLAR3 Q3 areas). The entry rate for those living in the most advantaged areas (POLAR3 Q5) was 10.8 per cent. Entry rates for those living in POLAR3 Q3 to Q5 areas fell by between 1 and 3 per cent proportionally, while for POLAR Q1 areas, they increased by 1 per cent (entry rates for those living in POLAR3 Q2 areas were unchanged).

In 2006, the entry rate to lower tariff providers from the most advantaged areas was 1.9 times the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas. By the end of the period in 2016, the entry rate from the most advantaged areas was 1.1 times the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas.

18 year old entry rates by POLAR3 quintile, country and tariff group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 56 English 18 year olds, entry rates to lower tariff providers by POLAR3 groups (logarithmic scale)



Entry rate for Scottish 18 year olds from the most deprived areas (SIMD) 51 per cent higher than in 2006

Figure 57 shows the entry rates for Scottish 18 year olds by area-based background based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2012²). SIMD ranks small geographical areas in Scotland by their relative level of deprivation across a range of measures, which are used to form five groups with equal population sizes. Not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS, meaning there is a substantial section of provision (mostly offered through further education colleges) that is not included in UCAS' figures. This means these entry rates will be lower than the total entry to higher education.

There is a progression from lower to higher entry rates from the most deprived to the least deprived areas that was maintained throughout the period. The entry rates in 2016 were 10.9 per cent from Q1 areas (most deprived), 18.0 per cent from Q2, 24.1 per cent from Q3, 31.1 per cent from Q4, and 42.3 per cent from Q5 areas (least deprived). This means the entry rates from the least deprived areas are 3.9 times as high as the entry rates from the most deprived areas, compared to 5.8 times as high in 2006 and 2008.

Entry rates increased in 2016 from all areas, with the most deprived areas having the largest proportional increase (+11.7 per cent), and less deprived areas having smaller increases (+3.1 per cent in Q2, +0.6 per cent in Q3, +2.6 per cent in Q4, and +2.9 per cent in Q5). The proportional increase for Q1 was one of the largest seen over the period.

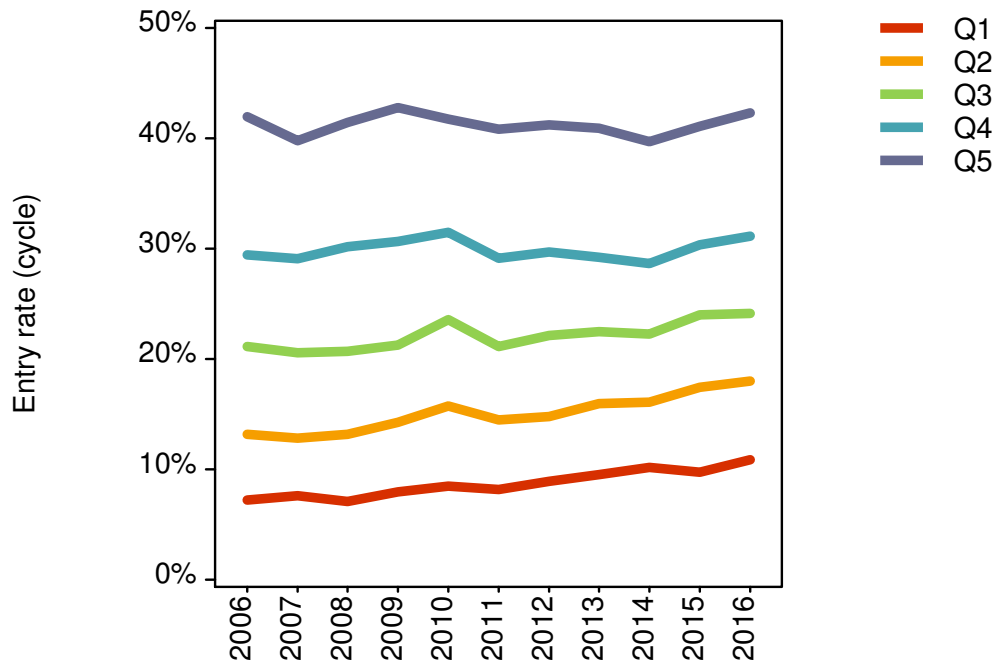
The percentage point changes for each of the SIMD groups were +1.1 percentage points for Q1 areas, +0.5 percentage points for Q2 areas, +0.1 percentage points for Q3, +0.8 percentage points for Q4, and +1.2 percentage points for Q5 areas.

The 2016 entry rate for the most deprived areas was the highest on record – 51 per cent higher than in 2006, and 33 per cent higher compared to 2011.

Entry rates for 18 year olds from Scotland by SIMD group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

² For consistency with previous 2016 cycle reporting, entry rates are reported using the SIMD12 measure, rather than the more recent SIMD15.

Figure 57 Scottish 18 year olds, entry rates by SIMD groups (Q5 = least deprived)



Entry rates by income background and ethnic group for state school pupils in England

For pupils attending state schools in England, administrative data sets record whether an individual is receiving free school meals (FSM, a means-tested benefit that can be used as an indicator of low income) and their ethnic group. Linking these pupil data sets (source: National Pupil Database and School Census, Department for Education) to the UCAS admissions data allows the calculation of entry rates by these categories recorded in the pupil data sets when the applicant was age 15.

To calculate these statistics, a conservative linking method has been used, that requires a full match across a range of identifying details to English domiciled UCAS applicants. This necessarily makes the entry rate lower than the true value (for example, ambiguous matches are not used). The linking method, and differences in scope between the two data sources, introduces more uncertainty into these linked entry rates than the other methods used in this report that do not rely on record linking. All the entry rates for FSM and ethnic group are based on linking.

Entry rates for non-FSM pupils increase five times faster than FSM pupils in 2016, but both reach new highs

Between 12 and 15 per cent of the state school 15 year old population were in receipt of free school meals (FSM) over the period³.

In 2016, the entry rate for young people who received FSM aged 15 was 16.1 per cent, 0.3 percentage points higher than in 2015, and a proportional increase of 1.6 per cent. The entry rate for non-FSM pupils in 2016 was 32.8 per cent, an increase of 1.4 percentage points – five times greater than the increase for FSM pupils – and a proportional increase of 4.3 per cent.

Since 2006, the entry rate for FSM pupils increased by 78 per cent proportionally, compared to a proportional increase of 33 per cent for the non-FSM entry rate over the same period.

Between 2006 and 2015, the entry rate for non-FSM pupils was between 14.6 and 15.8 percentage points higher than for FSM pupils. The proportional difference had been steadily falling during this time – in 2006, non-FSM pupils were over two and half times more likely to enter HE aged 18 than FSM pupils, but by 2015, this had reduced such that non-FSM pupils were just under twice as likely to enter HE than FSM pupils.

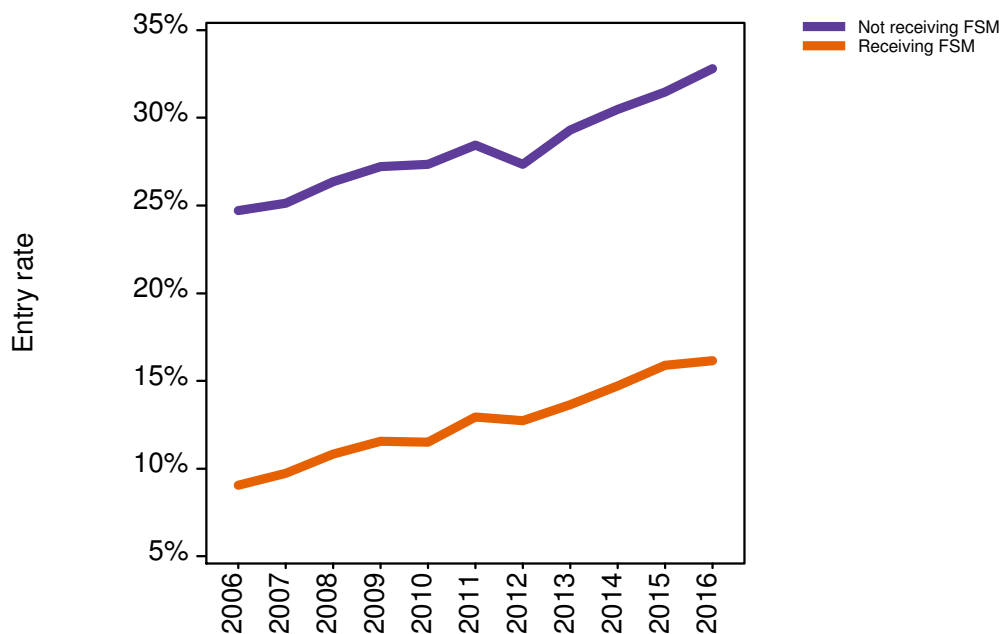
However, the larger increase in entry rates for non-FSM pupils in 2016 meant that the percentage point gap in entry rates between non-FSM and FSM pupils widened

³ Changes to the coverage of the free school meal indicator in the School Census for the 2013/14 academic year, affecting those applying in the 2016 cycle aged 18, have made it necessary to adjust identification of the FSM group in the UCAS data. This means that entry rates reported for the FSM and non-FSM groups differ slightly from those in previous end of cycle reports.

to its largest recorded value of 16.7 percentage points, and that the proportional difference increased so that non-FSM pupils became over twice as likely to enter HE than FSM pupils.

Entry rates for former English state school pupils by free school meal status can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 58 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by free school meal (FSM) status at age 15



Entry rates to lower tariff providers fall for FSM and non-FSM pupils in 2016

For young English people in 2016 who were formerly in English state schools and not in receipt of free school meals (non-FSM), 12.1 per cent entered lower tariff providers, 11.2 per cent entered medium tariff providers, and 9.5 per cent entered higher tariff providers. Non-FSM entry rates decreased in 2016 to lower tariff providers, but increased to medium and higher tariff providers to the highest levels recorded.

Entry rates to all types of providers were lower for the FSM group compared to the non-FSM group. In 2016, for those who were in receipt of FSM, 8.9 per cent entered lower tariff providers, 4.8 per cent entered medium tariff providers, and 2.5 per cent entered higher tariff providers. As with the non-FSM group, the entry rates to lower tariff providers decreased in 2015, but increased to medium and higher tariff providers, again to the highest recorded levels.

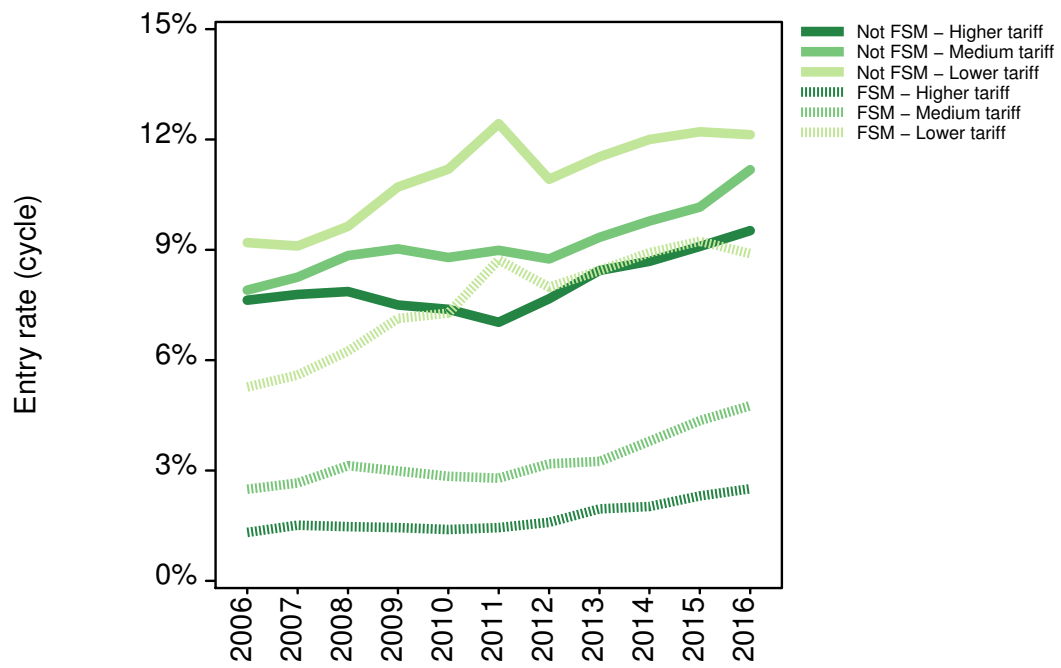
Comparing the entry rates of FSM and non-FSM pupils to higher tariff providers, non-FSM pupils were 3.8 times more likely to enter a higher tariff provider than FSM pupils in 2016. They were also 2.3 times more likely to enter a medium tariff provider, and 1.4 times more likely to enter a lower tariff provider, than FSM pupils in 2016.

Compared to 2015, the entry rate to higher tariff providers for FSM pupils increased by 8.2 per cent proportionally, compared to 4.6 per cent for non-FSM pupils. Compared to 2011, the proportional increase in entry rates to higher tariff providers for FSM pupils (+73 per cent) was double that for non-FSM pupils (35 per cent).

In 2016, the percentage point difference in entry rates to higher tariff providers for the two groups is 7.0 percentage points, the largest difference recorded, and +0.2 percentage points wider than in 2015.

Entry rates for former English state school pupils to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers by free school meal status can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 59 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by free school meal (FSM) status at age 15 and provider tariff group



Entry rates increase for all ethnic groups, but large differences persist

The entry rates for 18 year olds who were formerly in English state schools varies by the ethnic group recorded in the pupil data sets. In 2016, former state school pupils recorded as being in the Chinese ethnic group have the highest entry rate (57.9 per cent) and those recorded in the White ethnic group have the lowest (28.7 per cent).

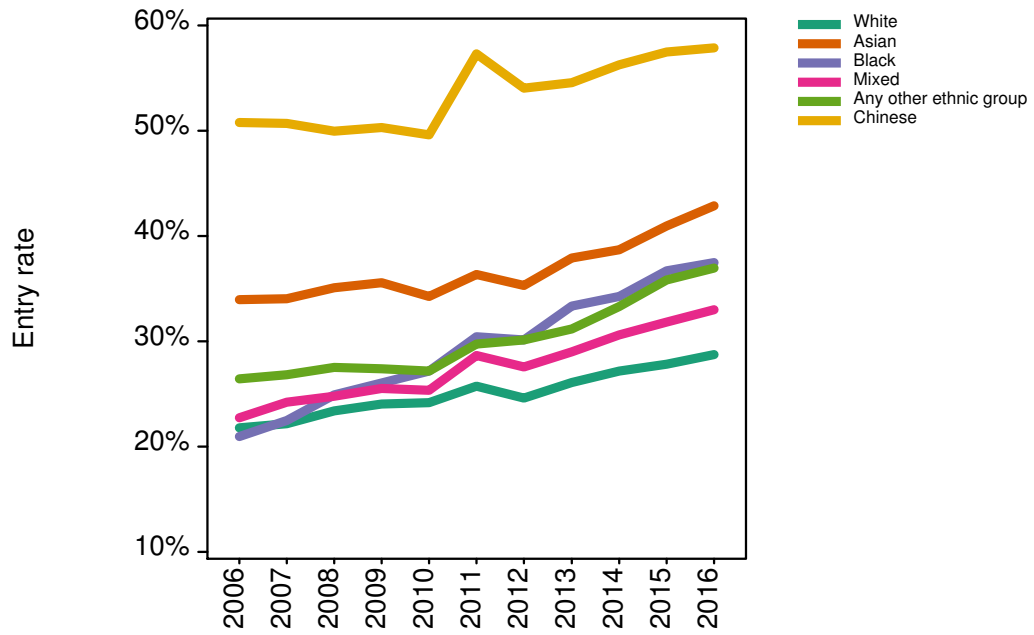
The entry rates for all ethnic groups increased in 2016, reaching the highest recorded values for each group. For the White ethnic group, the entry rate was 28.7 per cent (+0.9 percentage points, +3 per cent proportionally), 42.9 per cent for the Asian ethnic group (+1.9 percentage points, +5 per cent proportionally), 37.5 per cent for the Black ethnic group (+0.8 percentage points, +2 per cent proportionally), 33.0 per cent for the Mixed ethnic group (+1.2 percentage points, +4 per cent proportionally), 57.9 per cent for the Chinese ethnic group (+0.4 percentage points, +1 per cent proportionally), and 37.0 per cent for the Any other ethnic group (+1.1 percentage points, +3 per cent proportionally).

Young people recorded in the Black ethnic group have the largest increase in entry rates over the period, increasing from 20.9 per cent in 2006 to 37.5 per cent in 2016, a proportional increase of 79 per cent.

Since 2008, the White ethnic group have had the lowest entry rate of all ethnic groups. Since 2006, the entry rate for the White group has increased from 21.7 per cent to 28.7 per cent in 2016, a percentage point increase of +7.0 percentage points (the smallest increase of any ethnic group) and a proportional increase of 32 per cent. In 2016, the proportional difference in entry rates between the White ethnic group and the Mixed ethnic group (which had the second lowest entry rate) increased slightly to 15 per cent (compared to 14 per cent in 2015). The proportional difference between the White ethnic group and the Black ethnic group reduced from 32 per cent in 2015 to 20 per cent in 2016.

Entry rates for former English state school pupils by ethnic group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 60 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by ethnic group



Large differences in entry rates by ethnic group for English pupils accepted to higher tariff providers

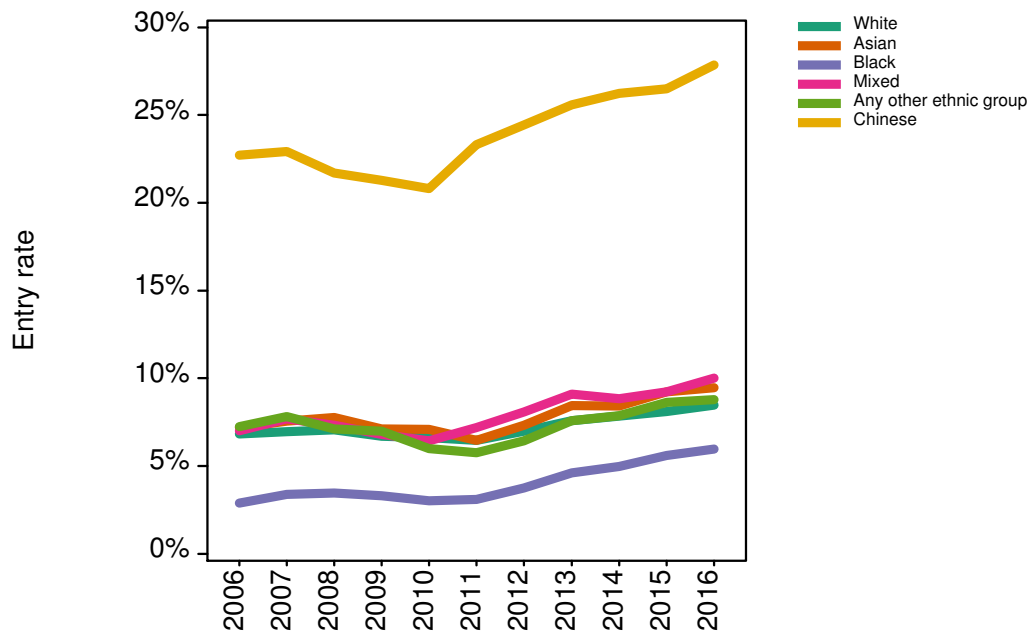
The entry rates for 18 year olds accepted to higher tariff providers varies by ethnic group. In 2016, the entry rate to higher tariff providers from the Chinese ethnic group was 27.8 per cent, the highest on record and considerably higher than for other ethnic groups. The lowest entry rate to higher tariff providers is for the Black ethnic group at 6.0 per cent in 2016. The other ethnic groups have entry rates to higher tariff providers in a relatively small range of between 8.5 and 10.0 per cent.

The entry rates to higher tariff providers for all ethnic groups increased in 2016, reaching the highest recorded values for each group. For the Chinese ethnic group, the entry rate was 27.8 per cent (+1.4 percentage points, +5 per cent proportionally), 10 per cent for the Mixed ethnic group (+0.8 percentage points, +9 per cent proportionally), 9.5 per cent for the Asian ethnic group (+0.2 percentage points, +2 per cent proportionally), 8.8 per cent for the Any other ethnic group (+0.2 percentage points, +2 per cent proportionally), 8.5 per cent for the White ethnic group (+0.4 percentage points, +5 per cent proportionally), and 6.0 per cent for the Black ethnic group (+0.4 percentage points, +7 per cent proportionally).

Young people recorded in the Black ethnic group have the lowest entry rate to higher tariff providers. However, this group had the largest proportional increase in entry rates to higher tariff providers over the period of 107 per cent, with entry rates increasing from 2.9 per cent in 2006 to 6.0 per cent in 2016. The Black group also had the second largest proportional increase in 2016 of 7 per cent. Despite this, the entry rate for the Black ethnic group remains 2.5 percentage points lower than the White ethnic group, the group which had the second lowest entry rate to higher tariff providers in 2016.

Entry rates for former English state school pupils to higher tariff providers by ethnic group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 61 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils to higher tariff providers by ethnic group



Entry rates to medium tariff providers at record high for all ethnic groups

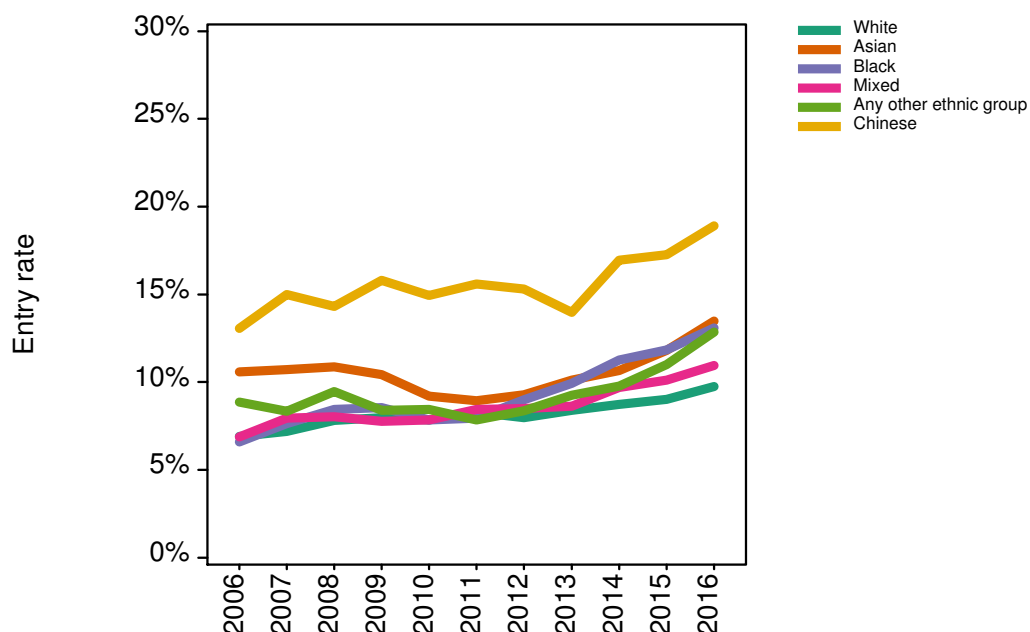
For entry to medium tariff providers, there is much less variability in entry rates across ethnic groups, compared with those to higher tariff providers. In 2016, the highest entry rates to medium tariff providers are from the Chinese ethnic group (18.9 per cent) and the lowest from the White ethnic group (9.8 per cent).

The entry rates to medium tariff providers for all ethnic groups increased in 2016, reaching the highest recorded values for each group. For the Chinese ethnic group, the entry rate was 18.9 per cent (+1.7 percentage points, +10 per cent), 13.5 per cent for the Asian ethnic group (+1.7 percentage points, +14 per cent proportionally), 13.1 per cent for the Black ethnic group (+1.2 percentage points, +10 per cent proportionally), 12.8 per cent for the Any other ethnic group (+1.8 percentage points, +17 per cent proportionally), 10.9 per cent for the Mixed ethnic group (+0.8 percentage points, +8 per cent proportionally), and for the White ethnic group, the entry rate was 9.8 per cent (+0.8 percentage points, +8 per cent proportionally).

The entry rates to medium tariff providers are greater than those to higher tariff providers for all ethnic groups, apart from the Chinese group.

Entry rates for former English state school pupils to medium tariff providers by ethnic group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 62 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils to medium tariff providers by ethnic group



Entry rates to lower tariff providers highest for the Asian ethnic group, lowest for the White ethnic group

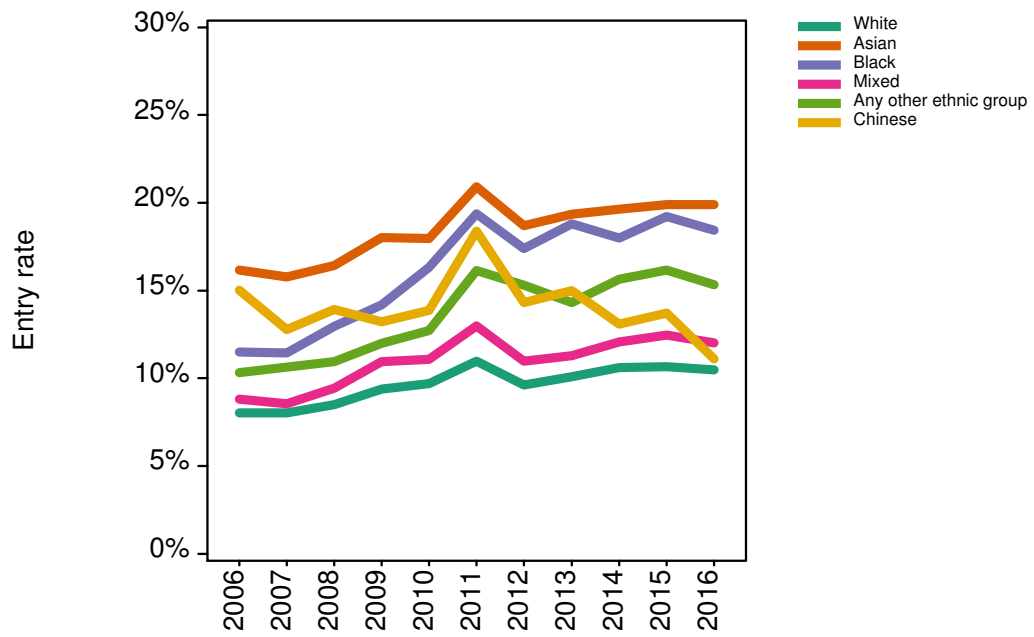
The entry rates for lower tariff providers varied by ethnic group, with a range of around 9 percentage points in 2016. Former pupils recorded as being in the Asian ethnic group had the highest entry rate to lower tariff providers (19.9 per cent in 2016) and those in the White ethnic group had the lowest (10.5 per cent in 2016).

The entry rates to lower tariff providers for all ethnic groups decreased in 2016, with the exception of the Asian ethnic group which remained the same. The rate for the Asian ethnic group was 19.9 per cent (constant), for the Black ethnic group it was 18.4 per cent (-0.8 percentage points, -4 per cent proportionally), for the Any other ethnic group it was 15.3 per cent (-0.8 percentage points, -4 per cent), for the Mixed ethnic group it was 12.0 per cent (-0.4 percentage points, -4 per cent proportionally), for the Chinese ethnic group it was 11.1 per cent (-2.6 percentage points, -19 per cent proportionally), and for the White ethnic group the entry rate was 10.5 per cent (-0.2 percentage points, -2 per cent proportionally). The entry rates in 2016 for all ethnic groups were lower than in 2011.

The entry rates to lower tariff providers are higher than those to medium and higher tariff providers for all ethnic groups, apart from the Chinese group where entry rates are highest for higher tariff providers. Entry rates to lower tariff providers for the Black ethnic group are three times higher than they are for higher tariff providers, and for the Asian ethnic group, they are twice as high. The entry rate to lower tariff providers for the White group is one quarter higher than it is for higher tariff providers, a similar proportional difference as for the Mixed ethnic group.

Entry rates for former English state school pupils to lower tariff providers by ethnic group can be explored further using the end of cycle equality and entry rates interactive data explorer, available on the UCAS website.

Figure 63 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils to lower tariff providers by ethnic group



Differences in entry rates by sex and ethnic group account for a large and increasing proportion of the entry rate gap between areas

The differences in entry rates between, for example, POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 5, are very much larger than those seen between men and women, or the White ethnic group and other ethnic groups. However, direct comparison of the size of the gaps between men and women, ethnic groups, and area-based measures of disadvantage is not always straightforward due to the different shares of the population these groups account for. For example, when comparing entry rates by sex, approximately one half of the population is compared to the other half. But when comparing entry rates for the most advantaged and disadvantaged areas using POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 5, only the most extreme 20 per cent of the population are being compared to each other. The use of these smaller and more extreme comparison groups means that large differences can occur more readily than is the case when comparing (for example) men and women.

One way of making a comparison of the differences in entry rates between different characteristics is to form groups that represent the same share of the population. This can be done using aggregates of small areas (such as Census wards), grouped using either entry rates or a measure of income.

Figure 64 shows the entry rates for men and women, alongside the entry rates for two groups formed from areas which account for the same shares of the population as men and women. The group labelled 'disadvantaged areas' contains the areas which are the most disadvantaged as measured using the 18 year old entry rate, and account for 51 per cent of the 18 year old population, the same share that men account for. The group labelled 'advantaged areas' contains areas which are the least disadvantaged (again, according to entry to HE) and account for the remaining 49 per cent of the population.

Across the period, the entry rates for disadvantaged and advantaged areas have increased. Despite accounting for the same share of the population as men and women, the entry rates for advantaged areas are consistently higher than the entry rates for women, while the entry rates for disadvantaged areas are consistently lower than the entry rates for men. However, the percentage point gap between women and men has increased during the period, from 5.9 percentage points in 2006 to 9.7 percentage points in 2016.

The percentage point difference between advantaged and disadvantaged areas has decreased very slightly during the period, from 15.7 percentage points in 2006 to 15.3 percentage points in 2016. These different patterns mean that in 2006, the entry rate gap for women and men was around a third of the entry rate gap (38 per cent) between those living in the most and least disadvantaged areas, once population shares are accounted for. By 2016, the gap between women and men was almost two thirds (63 per cent) of the gap between the most advantaged and disadvantaged areas.

Figure 64 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by sex, and by areas grouped using 18 year old entry rates

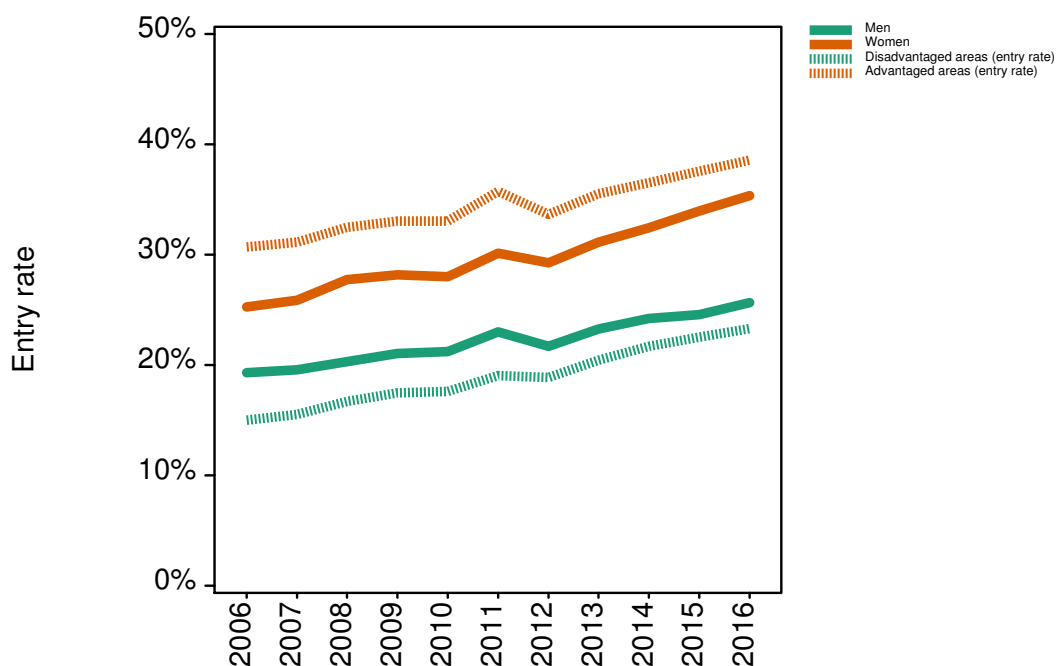


Figure 65 shows a similar analysis, but here the FSM indicator has been used to split the population into the advantaged areas and disadvantaged areas groupings. The disadvantaged areas group is formed from FSM pupils (which account for the first 13 per cent of the English state school pupil population) and then by adding non-FSM pupils from areas which have the largest proportions of the population that are FSM. This group accounts for 51 per cent of the population, the same as men. The advantaged areas group contains the remainder of the population.

Across the period, the entry rates for the disadvantaged and advantaged area groups have increased. Despite accounting for the same share of the population, the entry rates for advantaged areas are consistently higher than the entry rates for women, while the entry rates for disadvantaged areas are consistently lower than the entry rates for men.

The percentage point difference in entry rates between the disadvantaged and advantaged area groups has decreased during the period, from 12.8 percentage points in 2006 to 10.9 percentage points in 2016. These different patterns mean that in 2006, the gap between men and women was around half (47 per cent) of the percentage point gap between those living in high and low FSM areas, but by 2016, this had almost doubled to 89 per cent of the gap.

Figure 65 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by sex, and by areas grouped using free school meal (FSM) status at age 15

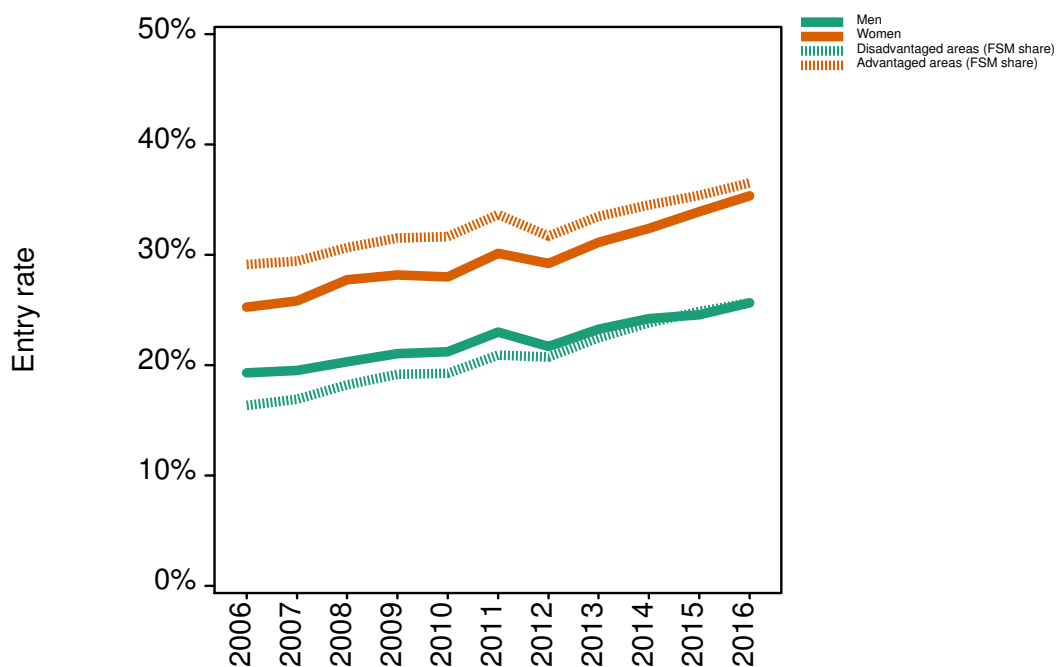


Figure 66 shows the entry rates for the White ethnic group, along with the entry rates for the Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other ethnic groups combined. Also shown are the entry rates for areas grouped according to their 18 year old entry rate, with the 'disadvantaged areas' group formed from areas with the lowest 18 year old entry rates and accounting for 84 per cent of the population (the same share as the White ethnic group). The 'advantaged areas' group contains the other areas.

In 2006, the entry rate for the White ethnic group was 21.7 per cent, while for the Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other group, it was 28.8 per cent. By 2016, the entry rates for these groups were 28.7 per cent and 39.3 per cent respectively. This means the percentage point gap between the White group and the combined Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other group had widened during the period, increasing from 7.0 percentage points in 2006 to 10.6 percentage points in 2016.

In 2006, the entry rate for the advantaged areas was 39.3 per cent, while for the disadvantaged areas it was 19.5 per cent. By 2016, the entry rates for both groups had increased to 46.1 per cent and 28.0 per cent respectively. This means that the percentage point gap in entry rates between the advantaged and disadvantaged area groups had narrowed slightly, from 19.8 percentage points in 2006 to 18.1 percentage points in 2016. When taken together, these patterns show how, in 2006, the gap in entry rates between the White group and the combined Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other group was around a third (36 per cent) of the gap in entry rates seen between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, after accounting for

population shares. By 2016, the gap between the White ethnic group and the combined Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other group had increased to 58 per cent of the size of the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged areas.

Figure 66 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by ethnic group, and by areas grouped using 18 year old entry rates

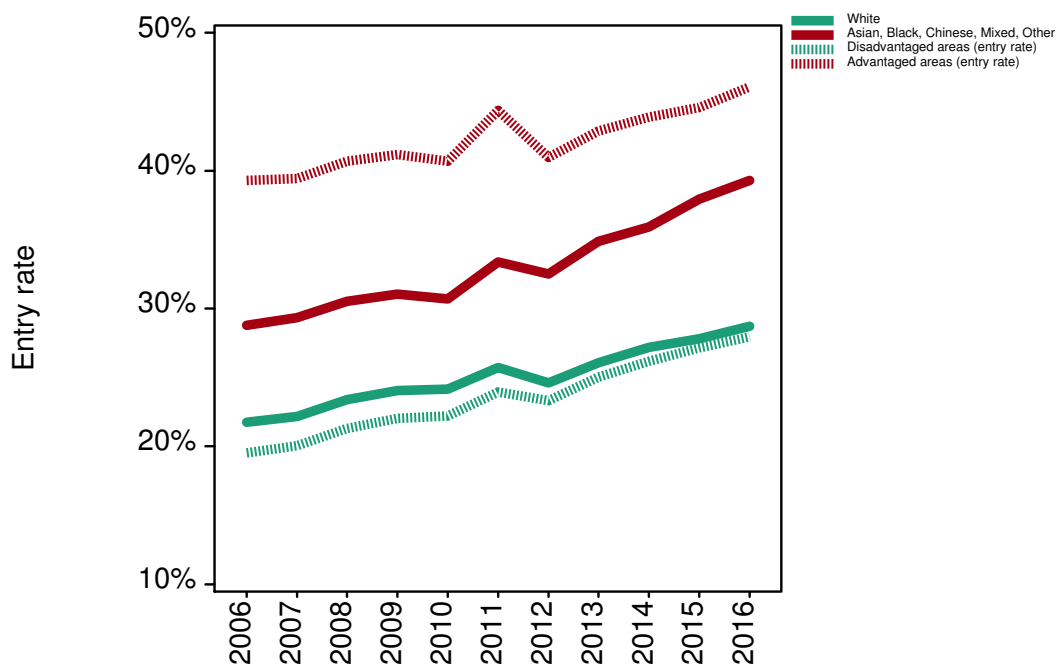
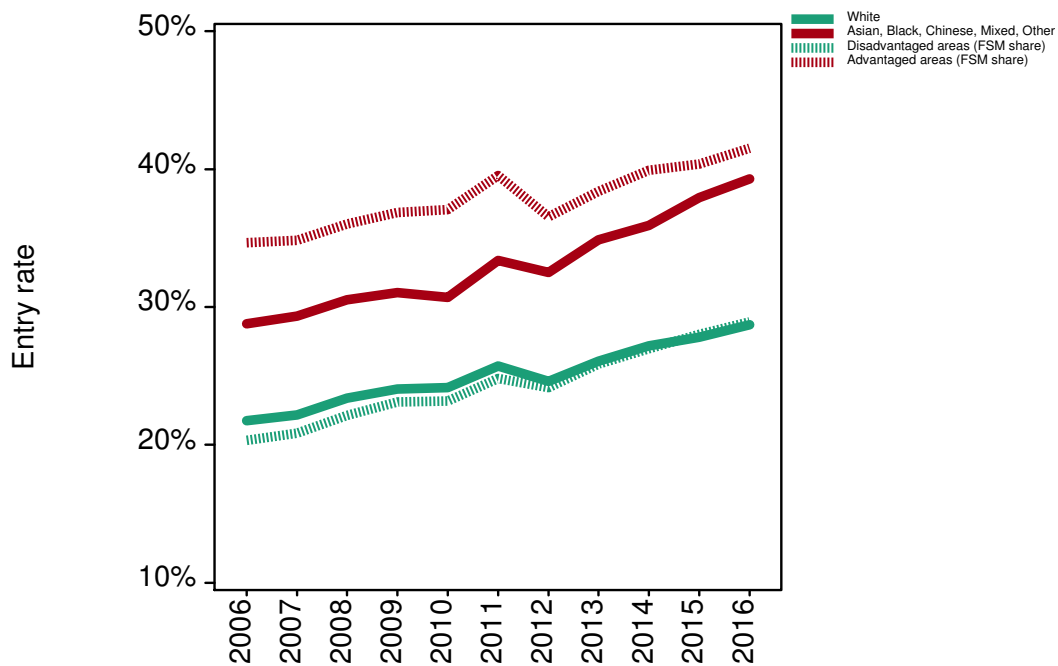


Figure 67 shows a similar analysis but using the FSM indicator to split the population into more advantaged and disadvantaged groups, in the same way as for the analysis by sex above (Figure 65). Here the disadvantaged areas group accounts for 84 per cent of the population, the same as the White ethnic group.

Once again, we see that the entry rates for all groups have increased across the period. In 2006, the entry rate for disadvantaged areas was 20.3 per cent, compared to 34.7 per cent for advantaged areas (14.3 percentage point gap). By 2016, the rates had increased to 28.9 per cent and 41.5 per cent respectively (12.6 percentage point gap). This means the gap between the White ethnic group and the combined Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other group was around half (49 per cent) of the size of the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged areas in 2006, after accounting for population share. By 2016, the gap between the White ethnic group and the combined Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed, and Other group was around 84 per cent of the advantaged to disadvantaged areas gap.

Figure 67 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by ethnic group, and by areas grouped using free school meal (FSM) status at age 15



Qualifications held by applicants

Entry to higher education is often determined by the type and strength of the qualifications held by an applicant. This analysis includes both qualifications that applicants list as achieved when they apply and those that are awarded during the application cycle itself. The qualifications applicants hold when they apply or enter higher education can vary, depending on which country they are from and their age. UK 18 year old applicants are the largest single group of applicants by country and age. This section describes the type and strength of qualifications held by this group and how they have changed in the 2016 cycle.

A levels are the most widely held qualification among 18 year old acceptances from the UK; around two-thirds held A levels in 2016. Other qualifications widely held by this group are BTECs, Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers (abbreviated to SQAs for Scottish Qualifications Authority), and the International Baccalaureate (IB). 18 year olds are often accepted holding combinations of qualifications, most frequently a combination of A levels and BTECs.

In this section, UK 18 year olds are grouped by the combination of qualifications they were recorded as having attained by the end of the cycle. Applicants holding three or more A levels, and not holding any of the other three qualification types, are reported in the 'A level only' group. Applicants with Level 3 BTECs (to the equivalent amount of three A levels) and not holding any of the other three qualification types are assigned to the 'BTEC only' group. Applicants with at least three Scottish Highers or Scottish Advanced Highers are in the 'SQA only' group. Applicants achieving the International Baccalaureate and not holding any of the other three qualification types are in the 'IB only' group. Applicants with a combination of A levels and BTECs (to the equivalent amount of three A levels) are reported as holding 'A level & BTEC'. Applicants who are not assigned to any of these groups are not reported. In 2016, these accounted for around 13 per cent of UK 18 year old applicants, and 11 per cent of acceptances.

One fifth of the 18 year old population in the UK entered with A levels as their main qualification

Figure 68 reports the proportion of the UK 18 year old population that was accepted to enter higher education (the entry rate) split by the type of qualification held by accepted applicants. The entry rates for those holding A levels only are shown on a separate axis (left hand side) as they are so much more widely held compared with the other qualifications. In 2016, 20.1 per cent of the UK 18 year old population were accepted for entry and were holding at least three A level qualifications. This was 0.5 percentage points higher (+3 per cent proportionally) than in 2015, and is the highest entry rate for this group in the period.

Entry rate for UK 18 year olds holding BTECs as their main qualification falls

The next mostly widely held qualification among UK 18 year olds is BTECs. In 2016, 3.5 per cent of UK 18 year olds were accepted for entry holding only BTECs (to the

equivalent of three A levels, e.g. the Extended Diploma), falling slightly (by less than 0.1 percentage points, -1 per cent proportionally) compared to 2015. This is the first time the entry rate for UK 18 year olds holding only BTECs has fallen since 2012, but due to strong growth between 2008 and 2015, the entry rate in 2016 remains 90 per cent higher than the rate at the start of the period in 2008. In 2016, 91 per cent of these applicants holding only BTEC qualifications were from England.

Entry rates for young people holding a combination of A levels and BTECs continues to increase

In 2016, 2.5 per cent of UK 18 year olds entered HE holding a combination of A levels and BTECs, 4.2 times the entry rate in 2008 (0.6 per cent), and 10 per cent higher than in 2015.

The entry rate for the combined BTEC only and A level and BTEC groups was 6.0 per cent in 2016, up from 5.8 per cent in 2015.

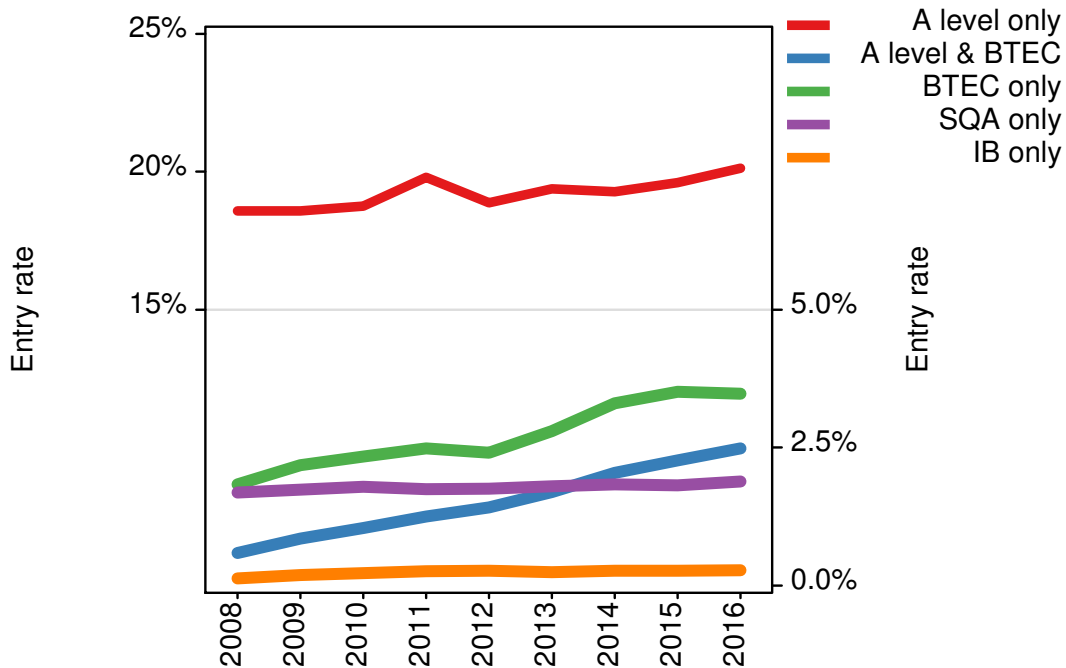
Entry rates to higher education through UCAS for those holding SQA qualifications increase to a new high

Young people from Scotland entering higher education through UCAS generally hold Scottish Highers, or Scottish Highers in combination with Advanced Highers (SQA awards). The entry rates for UK 18 year olds on this measure are low because few applicants outside of Scotland hold SQA qualifications. Between 2008 and 2015, there was little change in the entry rate of UK 18 year olds holding SQA awards since 2008, with the entry rate ranging between 1.7 and 1.8 per cent each cycle. In 2016, the entry rate increased to 1.9 per cent (+0.1 percentage points, 4 per cent proportionally). The entry rates for those holding SQA awards will be lower than the total entry to higher education holding SQA awards, since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS.

Relatively few young people enter higher education holding the International Baccalaureate

In 2016, the entry rate for UK 18 year olds entering higher education holding the International Baccalaureate (IB) was 0.3 per cent, just over 2,000 acceptances. This entry rate was relatively unchanged since 2010, ranging between 0.2 and 0.3 per cent, but was twice the rate in 2008.

Figure 68 UK 18 year old entry rates by type of qualification held



Acceptance rates for applicants increase for all qualification groups

Figure 69 shows the acceptance rate (the proportion of applicants accepted for entry) for UK 18 year olds by the type of qualification held by applicants at the end of the cycle. The acceptance rate for those who held A levels is higher than for those holding any other type of qualification. In 2016, the acceptance rate for the A level only group was 88.5 per cent, 0.5 percentage points greater than in 2015, and just under the 2008 rate.

In each cycle since 2010, the acceptance rate for applicants holding BTECs has been increasing. In 2016, the acceptance rate was 82.9 per cent, the highest recorded and 8.2 percentage points higher than the acceptance rate in 2010. In each year since 2011, the proportional increase in the acceptance rate for BTEC applicants has been greater than the A level only group, meaning the difference between the two groups has fallen to 5.6 percentage points in 2016.

Increase in acceptance rate for applicants holding both A levels and BTECs, and remains higher than for the BTEC only group

In 2016, the acceptance rate for those holding combinations of A levels and BTECs was 86.8 per cent. Aside from a small fall in 2010, the acceptance rate for the group has increased every year since 2008, and in 2016 was 9.0 percentage points higher than at the start of the period, the largest increase across the period of any qualification group.

Throughout the period, the acceptance rate for those holding combinations of A levels and BTECs has been lower than for the A level only group, but since 2010, higher than for the BTEC only group. In 2016, the acceptance rate for those with combinations of A levels and BTECs was 1.7 percentage points lower than the A level only group, and 3.9 percentage points higher than for the BTEC only group.

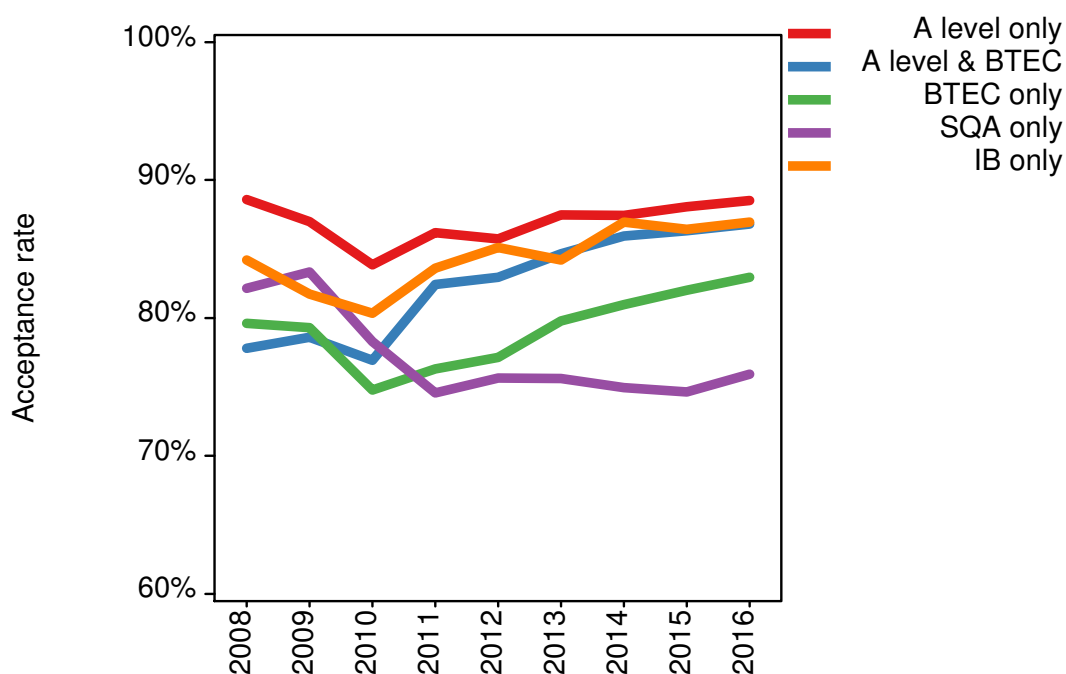
Despite increase in 2016, acceptance rate for applicants holding SQAs remains lower than for any other qualification group

The acceptance rate for the SQA only group in 2016 was 75.9 per cent, an increase of 1.3 percentage points from 2015. This acceptance rate is the lowest for any qualification group. Most applicants holding SQA awards are domiciled in Scotland, meaning the pattern in acceptance rates over time for this qualification group is similar to the pattern for Scotland as a whole.

Acceptance rate for applicants holding the IB second highest only to A level group

In 2016, the acceptance rate for those holding the IB qualification was 87.0 per cent. This is lower than the A level only group, and just above the rate of the A level and BTEC group.

Figure 69 Acceptance rates for UK 18 year olds by type of qualification held



Proportion of 18 year olds with ABB+ falls in 2016 for all tariff groups

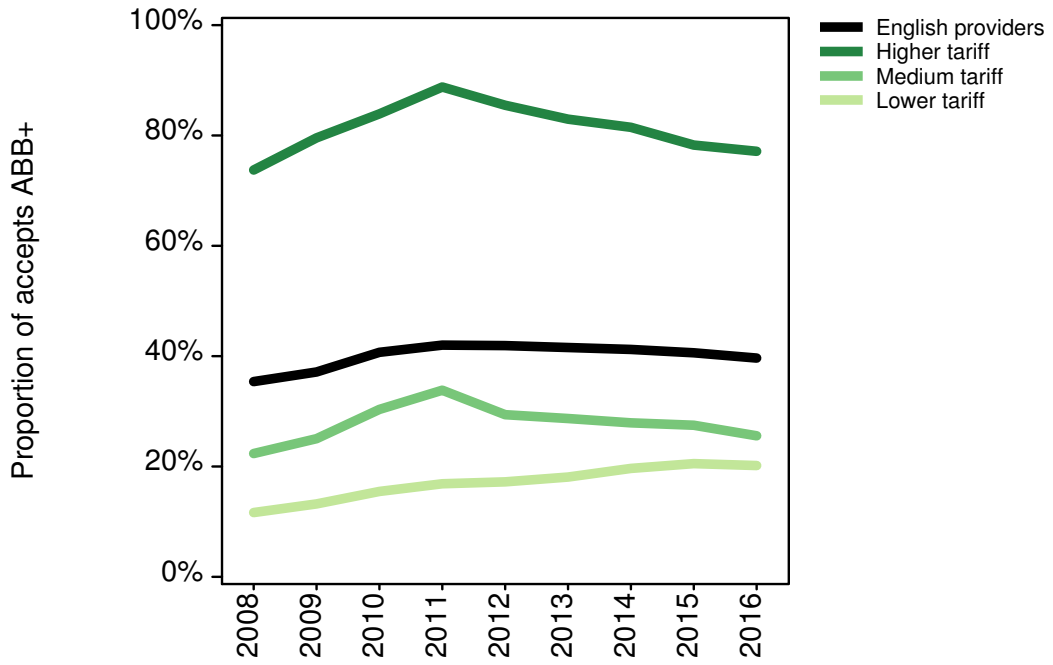
One summary statistic of the overall strength of grades held by students at a provider is the proportion holding combinations of qualifications with higher grades (denoted ABB+ here, reflecting the A level grades represented in the attainment group). For English 18 year old acceptances to English providers, that proportion increased from 35.4 per cent in 2008, to 42.0 per cent in 2011. It has decreased in each cycle since, reaching 39.6 per cent in 2016. The proportion with ABB+ qualifications varies substantially by the tariff group of the provider, and trends in the proportion vary by provider group.

The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances holding ABB+ is much higher at English higher tariff providers than at other English providers. At these providers, the proportion increased from 73.8 per cent in 2008 to a high of 88.8 per cent in 2011. Since then, it has decreased in each cycle, to reach 77.1 per cent in 2016. This is a reduction of 1.1 percentage points from 2015, the smallest reduction seen since the proportion began to fall in 2011.

The proportion holding ABB+ at medium tariff providers increased from 22.4 per cent to 33.8 per cent between 2008 and 2011. In 2012, the proportion decreased by 4.5 percentage points and there were further decreases in each cycle since so that by 2016, the proportion was 25.6 per cent. This is a reduction of 1.9 percentage points from 2015, the largest reduction in three years.

The proportion holding ABB+ at lower tariff providers increased in every cycle between 2006 and 2015. However, in 2016, the proportion holding ABB+ decreased for the first time, to 20.2 per cent. Despite this decrease, the proportion holding ABB+ at lower tariff providers was 73 per cent higher in 2016 than in 2008.

Figure 70 Proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are holding ABB+ qualifications, by provider tariff group



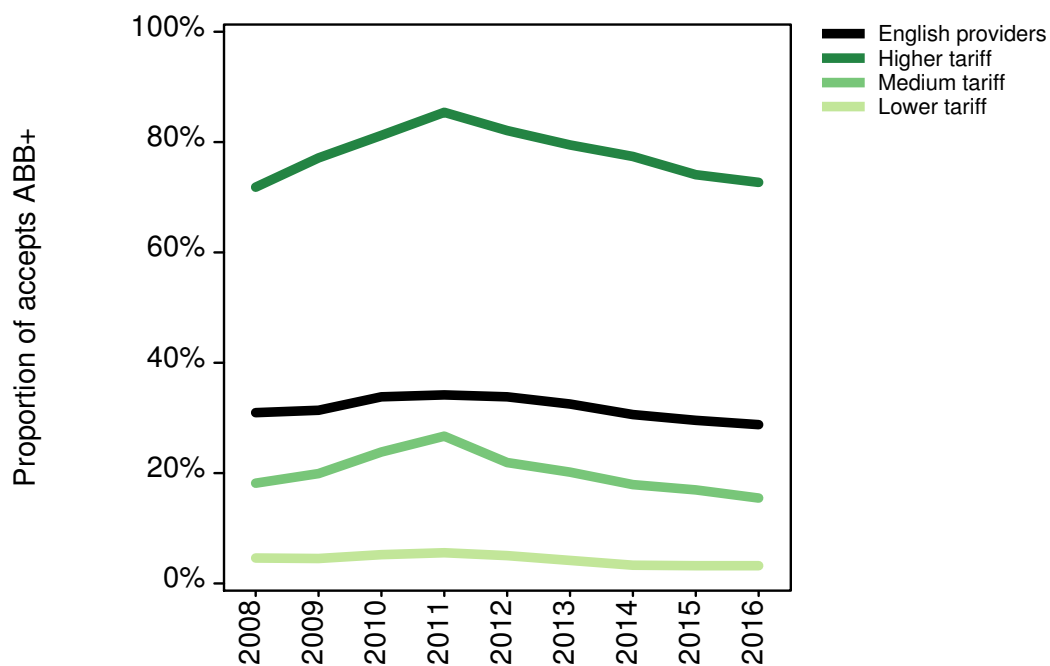
Proportion of acceptances that are ABB+ through A levels continues to fall for higher and medium tariff providers, lowest proportion on record for medium tariff providers

The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances to English providers who are ABB+ through their A level qualifications has fallen each year since 2011. In 2016, the proportion of acceptances that were A level ABB+ was 28.8 per cent, down from 29.6 per cent in 2015, and from 34.1 per cent in 2011.

The proportion of acceptances to higher tariff providers that are A level ABB+ is much higher than for English providers as a whole, ranging between 71.8 per cent and 85.4 per cent since 2008. In 2016, the proportion of acceptances to higher tariff providers that were A level ABB+ was 72.7 per cent, down slightly from 74.1 per cent in 2015, and the lowest since 2008.

The proportion of acceptances to medium and lower tariff providers that are A level ABB+ is lower than for English providers as a whole. For medium tariff providers, the proportion was 15.5 per cent in 2016, a fall compared to 2015 when the proportion was 17.0 per cent, and the lowest proportion on record. For lower tariff providers, the proportion of acceptances that were A level ABB+ was 3.3 per cent in 2016, the same as in 2015 and 2014.

Figure 71 Proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are holding A level ABB+ qualifications, by provider tariff group



Proportion of 18 year old ABB+ students who have BTECs doubles between 2008 and 2016

For English 18 year olds, the ABB+ acceptances are predominantly those who hold A level or BTEC qualifications at higher grades. In 2016, 73 per cent of these ABB+ acceptances were from those holding A levels (87 per cent in 2008), and 25 per cent were from those holding BTECs (12 per cent in 2008).

The trends in the proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are ABB+ for these providers are a composite of the varying contributions of the BTEC and A level sub groups to each provider group.

Proportion of acceptances holding higher grades at BTEC decrease for lower and medium tariff providers for the first time

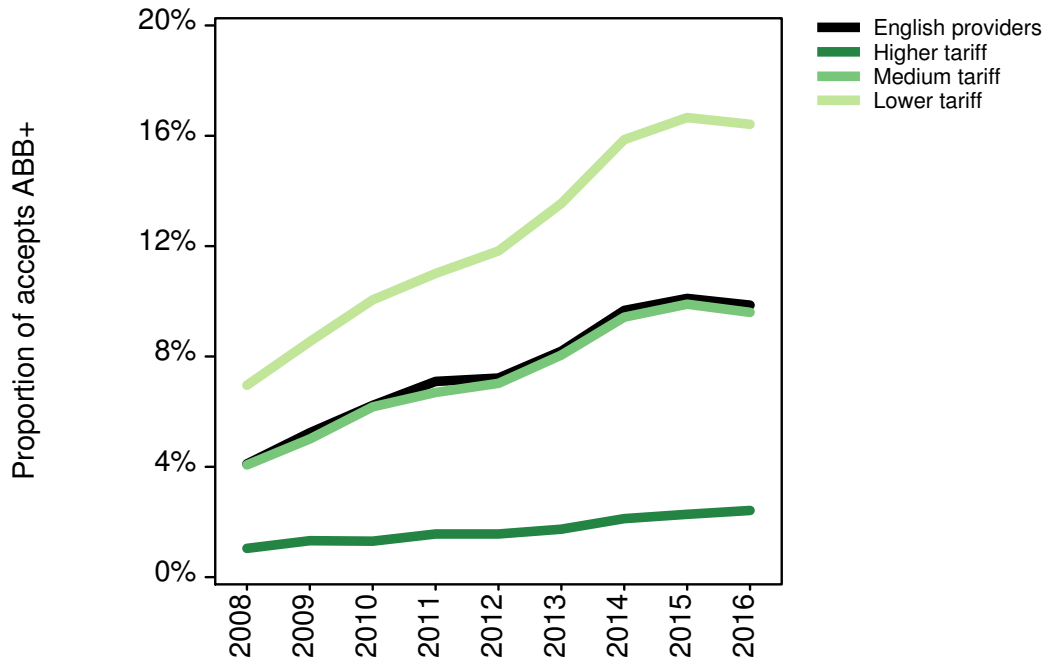
The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances to providers in England who are BTEC ABB+ has been increasing for all provider groups across all years. In 2016 however, the proportion of 18 year old English acceptances that held ABB+ from BTEC qualifications decreased to 9.9 per cent.

The proportion of acceptances to lower tariff providers that are BTEC ABB+ is higher than for English providers as a whole. The proportion for lower tariff providers increased each year between 2008 and 2015, more than doubling from 7.0 per cent to 16.7 per cent. However, in 2016 the proportion fell, for the first time, to 16.4 per cent.

The proportion of acceptances to medium tariff providers that are BTEC ABB+ is similar to that for all English providers, and follows the same trend. In 2016, the proportion of acceptances to medium tariff providers at BTEC ABB+ was 9.6 per cent, down from 9.9 per cent in 2015.

The proportion of BTEC ABB+ acceptances at higher tariff providers is much lower than for other provider types, but has increased in most cycles since 2008. In 2016, the proportion of English 18 year old acceptances holding BTEC ABB+ was 2.4 per cent, a 0.1 percentage point increase on 2015, and the highest on record.

Figure 72 Proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are holding BTEC ABB+ qualifications, by provider tariff group



Acceptance rates to higher tariff providers unchanged in 2016 for all grade profiles, largest changes for applicants with lower grades to medium and lower tariff providers

Figure 73 covers English 18 year old applicants in the 2015 and 2016 cycles with three A levels, who were either accepted to English providers or made a main scheme application to an English provider but were unplaced (in total, around 150,000 per cycle). The applicants are grouped by the number of A level grades they obtained (A* treated as six grades, E as one, labelled by a typical grade profile). For each group, the proportion of applicants accepted to higher, medium, or lower tariff providers (or left unplaced) is shown. This statistic simply describes the proportion of all applicants (regardless of what type of providers they applied to) with those grades who were in each category at the end of the cycle. The corresponding pattern for the 2011 cycle is shown as a thinner grey line.

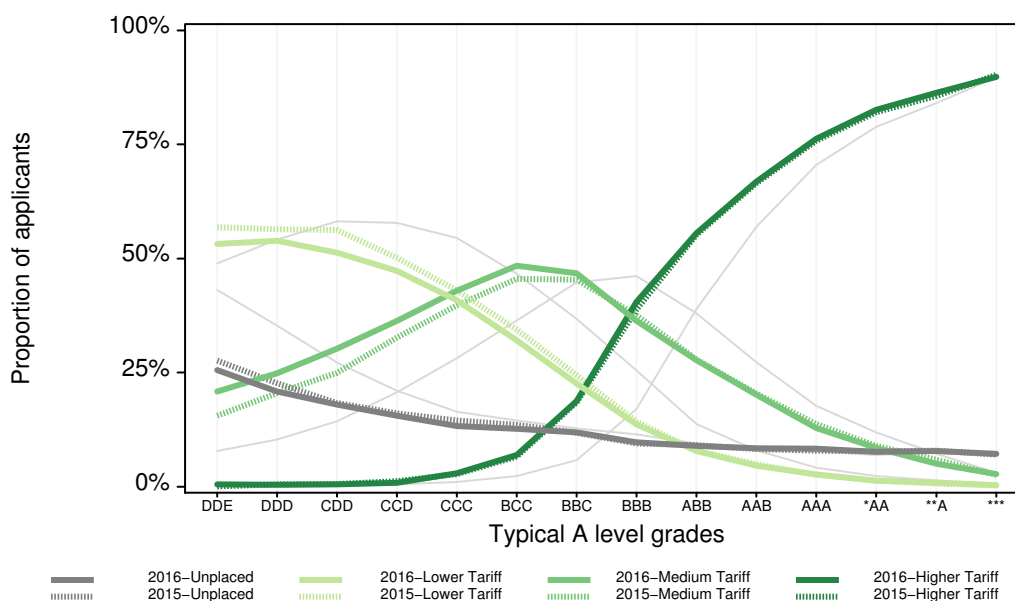
Applicants with the highest A level grades are most likely to enter higher tariff providers, those with the lowest grades are most likely to enter lower tariff providers, and those with grades in between are most likely to enter medium tariff providers. Applicants with the lowest number of A level grades are the most likely to be unplaced.

The proportion of applicants in each grade profile accepted to higher tariff providers is similar for the 2015 and 2016 cycles. This is in contrast to the increase in the acceptance rates between both of these cycles and 2011, for applicants with CCC to A*A*A.

In 2016, the proportion of applicants accepted to medium and lower tariff providers is similar to the proportion in 2015, for applicants with BBB and above. For applicants with BBC and below, the proportion accepted to medium tariff providers increased by between 1 and 6 percentage points (depending on the grade profile), while the proportion accepted to lower tariff providers decreased by between 2 and 5 percentage points.

The higher proportion of applicants (not accounting for any changes in the size of the groups in 2016) with BBC or below accepted to medium tariff providers, amounts to an additional 2,200 acceptances in 2016, around 40 per cent of the increase in acceptances to medium tariff providers in 2016. The lower proportion of applicants with BBC or below accepted to lower tariff providers, amounts to a decrease of 1,800 acceptances in 2016, around 30 per cent of the overall fall in acceptances to lower tariff providers.

Figure 73 Acceptance rates of English 18 year old applicants to higher, medium, and lower tariff English providers, by number of A level grades



Acceptances holding A levels remain stable for higher tariff providers in England, increase at medium tariff providers, and fall at lower tariff providers

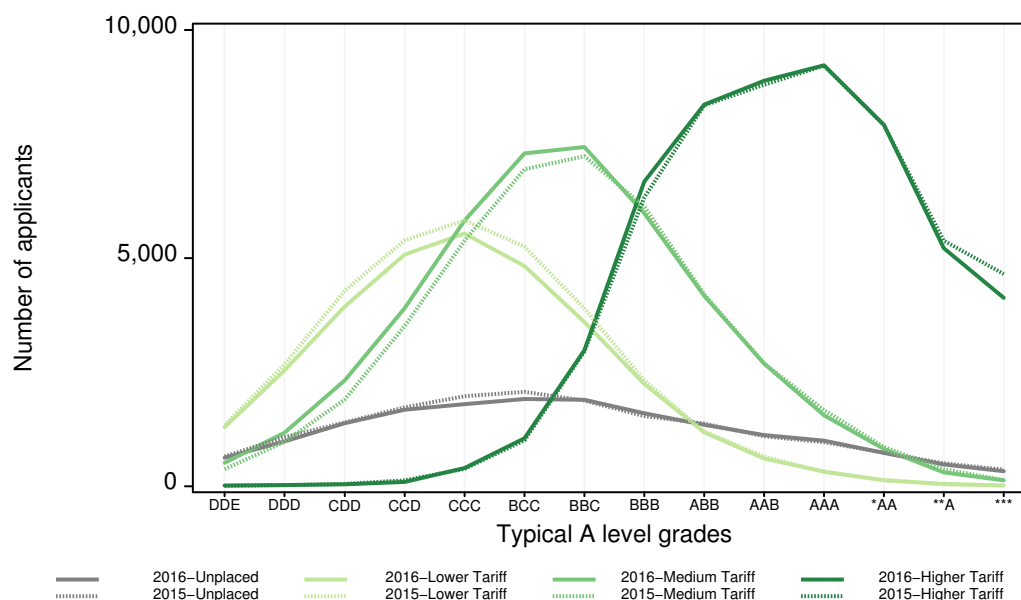
Figure 74 shows the number of English 18 year old acceptances to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers in England, grouped by the number of A level grades they obtained, for the 2015 and 2016 cycles.

In 2016, there were 55,000 acceptances from this group to higher tariff providers, almost the same number as in 2015, when there were 55,100 acceptances. The number of acceptances holding the highest grades of A*A*A* in 2016 fell by 500 compared to 2015, a proportional fall of 11 per cent. The number of acceptances with A*A*A also fell, by around 200 (-3 per cent proportionally). These falls in numbers were almost entirely offset by large increases in acceptances holding other grade profiles, with the largest increase coming from applicants holding the equivalent of BBB at A level. For this group, the number of acceptances increased by over 300 (6 per cent proportionally) to 16,500 in 2016.

Medium and lower tariff providers show a similar pattern to the pattern of acceptance rates in Figure 73. In 2016, the overall number of English 18 year old acceptances with A levels to medium tariff providers in England increased by 4 per cent to 44,300. The biggest increases in acceptances were for those holding A levels equivalent to between DDE and BBC. For each of these grade profiles, the number of acceptances increased by between 100 and 400.

The number of acceptances to lower tariff providers fell by 6 per cent to 32,000 in 2016. The largest falls, of between 100 and 400 acceptances, were among those with A levels equivalent to DDD and BBC.

Figure 74 English 18 year old acceptances to higher, medium, and lower tariff English providers, and unplaced applicants, by number of A level grades



Acceptance rates to medium tariff providers increase for applicants holding BTECs in 2016, but fall for lower tariff providers

Figure 75 shows the proportion of applicants accepted to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers in England, for English 18 year old applicants holding a Level 3 BTEC qualification equivalent in size to three A levels. Acceptance rates are plotted by the grade profile achieved, ranging from three Pass (P) grades through to three Distinction* (D*) grades.

Across all BTEC grade profiles, acceptance rates to lower tariff providers were higher than for medium tariff providers, which in turn were greater than the acceptance rates for higher tariff providers. In 2016, applicants with BTEC grade profiles of MPP through to DMM were most likely to be accepted to lower tariff providers, with acceptance rates of over 60 per cent. Applicants with BTEC grades of D*DD and above were least likely to be accepted to a lower tariff provider, though the acceptance rates were still relatively high (compared to the acceptance rates for higher and medium tariff providers) at around 50 per cent.

Applicants with higher BTEC grades were more likely to be placed at higher and medium tariff providers than applicants with lower BTEC grades. For example, 4 per cent of BTEC applicants with PPP were accepted to medium tariff providers, and none were accepted to higher tariff providers. However, 27 per cent of BTEC

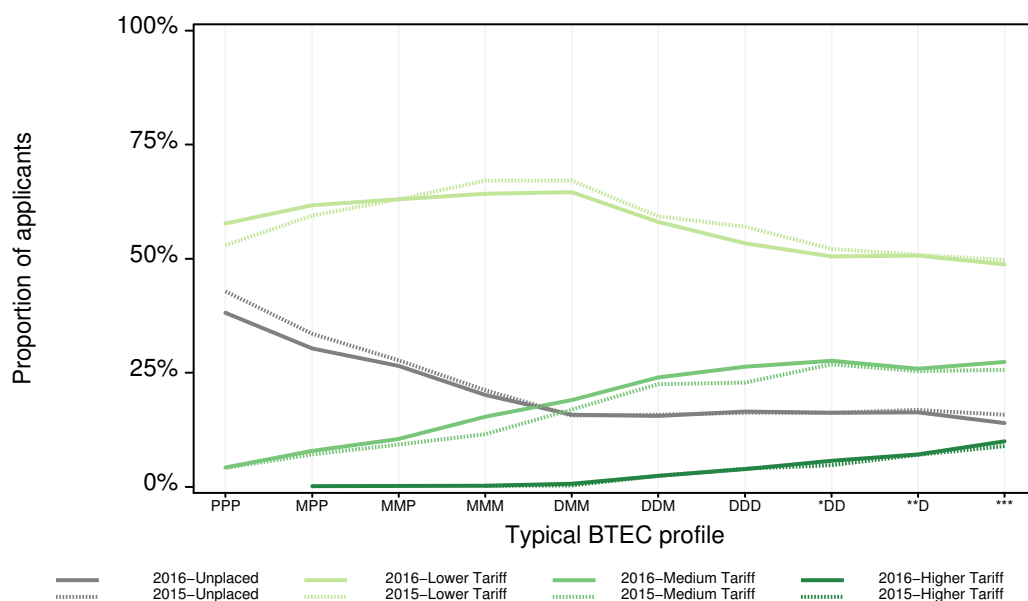
applicants with D*D*D* were accepted to medium tariff providers, and 10 per cent were accepted to higher tariff providers.

Between 2015 and 2016, the acceptance rates to lower tariff providers for applicants with grades of MMM or above fell. The largest fall, 6 per cent proportionally, was for applicants with DDD.

At the same time, acceptance rates to medium tariff providers, for the same applicants, increased. The largest increase in acceptance rates to medium tariff providers was for applicants with MMM, which increased by 33 per cent proportionally (3.8 percentage points). But there were also large increases in acceptance rates to medium tariff providers for applicants with MPP, MMP, DMM, and DDD, which all increased by at least 10 per cent proportionally.

The acceptance rate to higher tariff providers for 18 year old English applicants holding BTECs remained unchanged in 2016.

Figure 75 Acceptance rates of English 18 year old applicants to higher, medium, and lower tariff English providers, by BTEC grade profile



BTEC acceptances to higher and medium tariff providers up, but fall at lower tariff providers

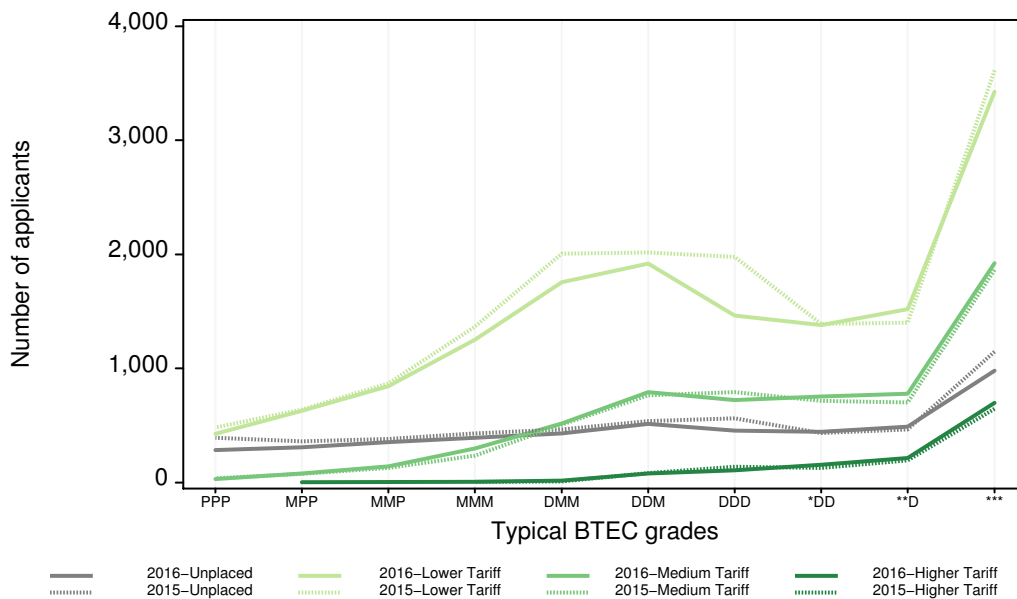
Figure 76 shows the number of English 18 year old acceptances to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers in England, grouped by the BTEC grade profile they obtained, for the 2015 and 2016 cycles.

For all tariff groups, there were more acceptances from applicants with BTEC grades of D*D*D* than for any other grade profile. In 2016, there were 3,400 applicants with D*D*D* accepted to lower tariff providers, 1,900 accepted to medium tariff providers, and 700 accepted to higher tariff providers.

In 2016, there were 14,600 acceptances from this group to lower tariff providers, 1,100 fewer than to 2015, and a proportional fall of 7 per cent. With the exception of the D*D*D grade profile, where the number of acceptances increased by 8 per cent, the number of acceptances fell for all grade profiles. The largest falls were for applicants with DDD (-500 acceptances, -26 per cent), and DMM (-300 acceptances, -12 per cent) grade profiles, which between them accounted for two thirds of the overall fall in BTEC acceptances to lower tariff providers.

There were an additional 200 acceptances to medium tariff providers from English 18 year olds with BTECs in 2016, an increase of 4 per cent. There were also an additional 100 acceptances to higher tariff providers from this group, an increase of 6 per cent. For both higher and medium tariff providers, the share of acceptances from across the grade profiles was unchanged between 2015 and 2016.

Figure 76 English 18 year old acceptances to higher, medium, and lower tariff English providers, and unplaced applicants, by BTEC grade profile



Recruitment changes for providers

Since the changes made to tuition fees and student number controls that came into place for the 2012/13 entry cycle, recruitment across providers has varied. For most providers, the number of acceptances has increased, but for other providers it has fallen. These patterns in recruitment are investigated for the 154 largest providers (accounting for 95 per cent of all acceptances in 2016) that have been consistent users of UCAS since 2007.

Acceptances in 2016 increase for the majority of higher and medium tariff providers

Figure 77 shows proportional changes in recruitment at provider-level over two different time intervals. Changes between 2012 and 2015 are plotted against the horizontal axes, while changes between 2015 and 2016 are plotted against the vertical axes. Providers on the right hand side of the graph increased their total recruitment numbers between 2012 and 2015, while providers on the upper half of the graph increased their recruitment between 2015 and 2016. Each provider is coloured according to tariff group.

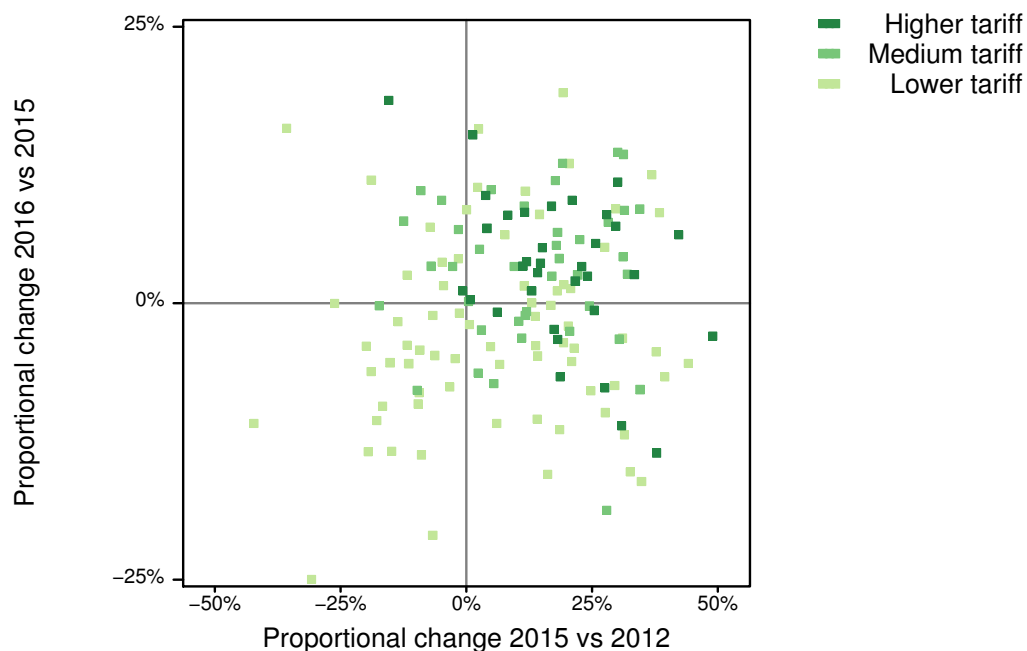
Between 2012 and 2015, around two thirds of providers increased their recruitment. The higher tariff group increased in size by 18 per cent during this period, with almost all increasing their recruitment. Recruitment to medium tariff providers increased by 17 per cent, with three quarters of providers in this group increasing in size. Just over half of lower tariff providers increased their recruitment between 2012 and 2015, with an 8 per cent proportional change in recruitment for the lower tariff group.

Between 2015 and 2016, just under half of providers increased their recruitment. The higher tariff group of providers grew by 3 per cent, with around three quarters increasing their numbers of acceptances. The medium tariff group also grew by 3 per cent, with two thirds of medium tariff providers increasing in size. In 2016, the lower tariff group decreased in size by 3 per cent. Two thirds of lower tariff providers had a reduction in numbers, with the rest having increases.

Most providers that had decreases in acceptances between 2012 and 2015, and again in 2016, are lower tariff

Among the set of providers that increased in size between 2012 and 2015, around half had further increases in 2016. Among the providers that decreased in size between 2012 and 2015, over half had further decreases in 2016, with the majority being lower tariff.

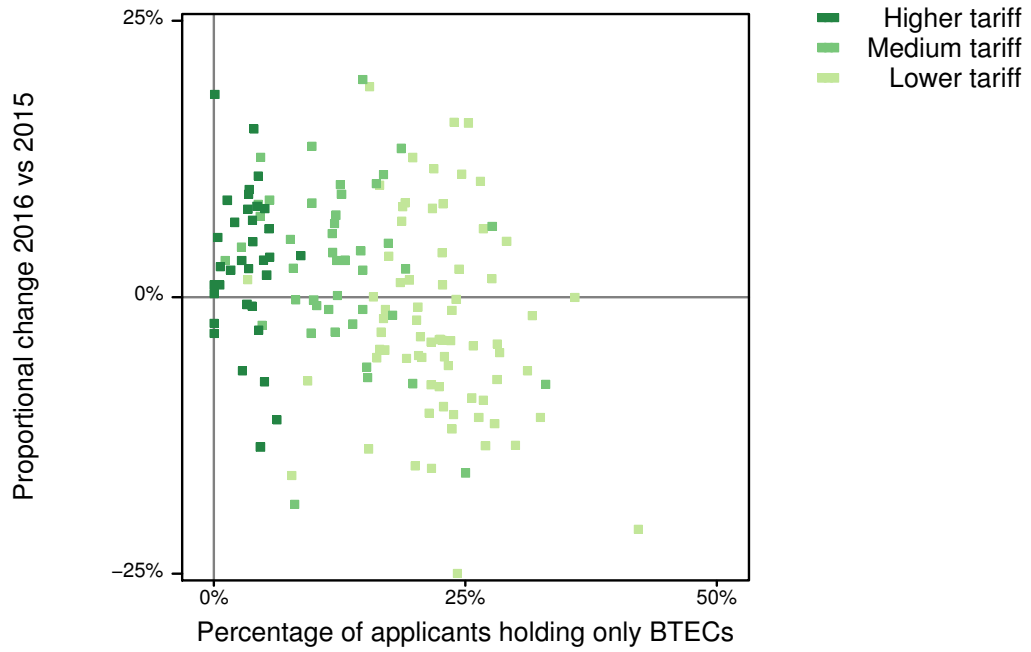
Figure 77 Selected provider-level changes in recruitment between 2015 and 2016, relative to recruitment changes between 2012 and 2015



Changes in recruitment in 2016 only unrelated to share of intake holding BTECs

Figure 78 shows the proportional change in recruitment (English domicile only) at each provider against the proportion recruited that held BTECs as their main qualification. The share of acceptances to higher tariff providers that hold BTECs as their main qualification (between 0 and 9 per cent) is generally smaller than for medium (between 1 and 33 per cent) and lower tariff providers (between 3 and 42 per cent). However, the proportional changes in recruitment between 2015 and 2016 ranged between +/-20 per cent for most providers.

Figure 78 Selected provider-level changes in recruitment between 2015 and 2016, relative to the share that hold BTECs as their main qualification, English domicile only



Section 3

Glossary

ABB+	The high grade qualification combinations that were used in the number control arrangements for most courses in England in the 2013/14 academic year. They approximate the categories that relate to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) student number control arrangements in that year from information recorded in the UCAS system. The assessment of entry qualifications uses a number of data sources, including information provided by applicants themselves.
Acceptance	An applicant who at the end of the cycle has been placed for entry into higher education.
Acceptance rate	The number of acceptances divided by the number of applicants.
Adjustment	An acceptance route where applicants who have met and exceeded the conditions of their firm choice choose to take up an alternative offer.
Age	This analysis uses country-specific age definitions that align with the cut off points for school and college cohorts in the different administrations of the UK. For England and Wales, ages are defined on 31 August, for Northern Ireland on 1 July, and for Scotland on 28 February the following year. Defining ages in this way matches the assignment of children to school cohorts. For applicants outside of the UK, a cohort cut off of 31 August has been used.
A level points	A level grades are assigned points such that A* = 6 points, A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1. Achieved A level grade profiles of applicants are assigned the total number of points of their best three achieved grades, for example a grade profile of AAB would be worth 14 A level points.
Applicant	A person who has made an application in the UCAS system. Counts of applicants include those applying through the main scheme, late applicants direct to Clearing, and records of prior acceptance (RPAs).
Application rate	The number of applicants divided by the estimated base population.
Base population estimate	The population estimates are based on Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates and national population projections (published in June 2015). For 16 to 20 year olds, the estimates are obtained by ageing 15 year olds from the appropriate number of years earlier. This approach avoids the estimates being susceptible to changes in net migration (including overseas students) during these ages. Older ages are obtained from the mid-year estimates and national population projections without ageing. In both cases, the estimates are adjusted from age at mid-year to age on the country-specific reference dates using the monthly distribution of births. Analysis of application rates by area-based background are supported through small area population estimates available from the Office for National Statistics, National Records for Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. These small area population estimates have been revised to be consistent with the national level population estimates.

BTEC	<p>Originally Business and Technician Education Council, BTECs are qualifications now offered by Pearson. The Level 3 BTECs covered in this analysis include the following from the NQF framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Awards • National Certificate • National Diploma • Subsidiary Certificates <p>They also include the following qualifications in the QCF framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Diploma • Diploma • Subsidiary Diploma • 90-credit Diploma <p>The majority of BTECs are awarded to applicants from England.</p>
Clearing	An acceptance route available late in the application cycle.
Cohort	A group of the population all born in the same academic year, and are therefore, for example, all aged 18 on a particular reference date.
Defer (deferred)	Most acceptances are into the academic year that starts immediately at the end of the cycle, for example into 2015/16 from the 2015 application cycle. Acceptances can also be deferred for entry into the following academic year, for example into 2016/17 from the 2015 cycle. These are called deferred acceptances.
Direct Clearing	Applied via Clearing without an initial application through the main scheme (i.e. prior to the 30 June deadline).
Domicile	Declared area of permanent residence.
Entry rate	Number of acceptances from a UCAS application cycle divided by the estimated base population.
Extra	An acceptance route where applicants holding no offers after using all five main scheme choices can make additional choices.
Firm choice	An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their first choice. These can be either conditional (dependent on achieving specified conditions) or unconditional (applicant has met specific conditions and are assumed to be accepted or placed at the provider).
FSM	Free school meals – a means-tested benefit that can be used as an indicator of low income, which has been sourced from the National Pupil Database (NPD). Changes to the coverage of the free school meal indicator in the School Census for the 2013/14 academic year, affecting those applying in the 2016 cycle aged 18, have made it necessary to adjust identification of the FSM group in the UCAS data. This means that entry rates reported for the FSM and non-FSM groups differ slightly from those in previous end of cycle reports.

GDP	Gross Domestic Product – a measure of economic growth based on goods and services within a period of time.
HE	Higher education.
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England.
Higher tariff provider	A provider that belongs to the higher tariff group, from the grouping of providers based on the average levels of attainment of their UK 18 year old accepted applicants (summarised through UCAS Tariff points) in recent cycles. The other two groups are medium tariff providers and lower tariff providers. Each group of providers accounted for around a third of all UK 18 year old acceptances in recent cycles.
IB	International Baccalaureate Diploma.
Insurance choice	An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their second choice, in case the conditions of their firm choice are not met. These can be either conditional (dependent on achieving specified requirements) or unconditional (no further requirements to be met).
Main scheme	The main UCAS application scheme through which up to five course choices can be applied to. This opens in September and closes to new applications on 30 June the following year.
Main scheme Clearing	Where an applicant was unsuccessful in the main scheme (i.e. applied before 30 June), and subsequently found a place using Clearing.
Multi-dimensional equality measure (MEM)	<p>The multiple equality measure (MEM) brings together information on several equality dimensions for which large differences in the probability of progression into higher education exist. These equality dimensions include sex, ethnic group, where people live (using the POLAR3 classification), secondary education school sector (state or private), and income background (as measured by whether a person was in receipt of free school meals (FSM), a means-tested benefit while at school).</p> <p>These equality dimensions are combined using statistical modelling techniques and a linked data set of pupils in English schools who were aged 18 between 2006 and 2010 (source: National Pupil Database and School Census, Department for Education). The probability of entry to higher education aged 18 is then calculated based on these equality characteristics and their combinations.</p> <p>These probabilities are then used to aggregate pupils into groups, where group 1 contains those least likely to enter higher education (“most disadvantaged” in this context), and group 5 contains those most likely to enter higher education (“most advantaged” in this context). The composition of these groups, and their entry rates, can then be calculated and the trends in these assessed over time.</p>
National pupil database (NPD)	The Department for Education's National Pupil Database (NPD) holds a range of information about pupils who attend schools and colleges in England. For this

	analysis, a link has been formed between individuals attending state schools and colleges in the NPD at 15 years old and those who were 18 years old in UCAS' data three years later.
Non-EU	Countries outside the European Union, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
Offer	Provider decision to grant a place to an applicant. May be subject to the applicant satisfying academic and/or other criteria.
Offer rate	The proportion of applications that receive an offer.
POLAR3	Developed by HEFCE and classifies small areas across the UK into five groups according to their level of young participation in HE. Each of these groups represents around 20 per cent of young people and is ranked from quintile 1 (areas with the lowest young participation rates, considered as the most disadvantaged) to quintile 5 (highest young participation rates, considered most advantaged).
Provider	A higher education provider – a university or college.
RPA	Record of Prior Acceptance. When a provider informs UCAS of applicants it has accepted outside of the normal application process (e.g. individuals who have applied directly to the provider).
Reply	Applicant response to any offers received – this could be firm, insurance, or decline.
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland, providing a relative measure of deprivation among small areas (data zones). In this report, the SIMD 2012 has been used to group areas in each year in the times series, from 2006 to 2016.
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority – Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications taken by young people in Scotland when applying to higher education.
Tariff	A numerical summary of qualification level.
UK	United Kingdom. Excludes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

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