



End of Cycle Report

2014

UCAS Analysis and Research
December 2014

UCAS

Section 1 **Key findings**

Section 2 **Analytical overview of the 2014 cycle**

Section 3 **Reference tables**

Section 4 **Glossary**

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Foreword

The 2014 End of Cycle Report is our most comprehensive analysis to date of recruitment to full time undergraduate courses in the UK.

It provides a rich picture of demand and outcomes for higher education in the UK, entry rates, and qualifications – through the lens of both the applicant and higher education providers (HEPs). It provides information across and within the four nations of the UK and in addition analyses demand and entry by domicile, age, background, ethnic group and qualifications.

In many ways, readers of this report might be forgiven for thinking that the 2014 cycle marks a return to ‘normality’ after the sharp rise in demand at the end of the last decade and then the turbulence which followed the raising of tuition fees and partial exemption from number controls in England from 2012, and other concurrent HE reforms across the UK. This cycle appears to consolidate the recovery in 2013 with modest rises in the number of applicants and entry rates, and a continuing reduction in the gap between rich and poor.

These improving indicators are most welcome.

However, a deeper look at our report reveals some interesting trends beneath the encouraging headline figures for both applicants and HEPs.

Applicants

Almost all young applicants get at least one offer and as many as two thirds in some grade profiles get a full hand of five offers. While this level of appetite to recruit signals a ‘buyers’ market’ for applicants, it also indicates that potential students could afford to be more ambitious in their choices. Our analysis of the use of the insurance choice and the numbers of applicants who change their minds after receiving their results and having their offers confirmed, suggests that many learners are initially ruling themselves out of other courses, unaware of how successful their applications might have turned out to be.

The ambition for every applicant, their advisers and parents, and indeed the HEPs they are applying to, is that each one of their choices represents a genuine appetite to pursue that course, even if some choices represent real stretch for them in terms of their examination results. As offer rates have increased, young applicants with most predicted grade profiles are between 30 and 80 per cent more likely to get five offers than five years ago. This indicates scope for applicants to recalibrate their initial applications to include one or two courses with tougher entry requirements. Currently the risks of this approach are relatively low, not least since one of the benefits of the recent tough recruitment years is that Clearing has matured into a standard and widely used admissions route – increasing again this year to a new record of 61,300.

It would indeed be an interesting development to see a greater diversity between firm and insurance offer conditions and a greater appetite from applicants to choose one ambitious and one safer choice – both of which they would be happy to accept.

Our report also provides a stunning account of social change, with the most disadvantaged young people over 10 per cent more likely to enter higher education than last year and a third more likely than just five years ago – 40 per cent more likely for higher tariff institutions. These trends are pushing the difference in entry rates between rich and poor to historic lows. But it is incontrovertible that growth in participation in HE by disadvantaged young people is disproportionately to lower tariff providers and through using BTECs to support progression. This is reflected in the wider gaps in entry rates for those holding A levels and, especially, to higher tariff providers. Here, even after recent increases, only 3 per cent of disadvantaged 18 year olds enter compared to 21 per cent of those from the most advantaged backgrounds.

Once again, our report highlights the disquieting gap between young men and young women which continues to worsen with young men less likely to apply for higher education than young women are to enter. In 2014, 18 year old women were a third more likely to enter than men and showed higher entry rates than men to all types of providers and across 98 per cent of localities. In almost a quarter of areas,

women were 50 per cent more likely to enter HE in 2014 than men. The differences are greatest within disadvantaged groups where only two young men enter for every three young women. The gap between men and women equates to a shortfall of 32,000 18 year old men entering higher education this year: this is equivalent to the total number of young men who entered from London and the South East combined.

So, although entry to HE for disadvantaged groups is improving rapidly on many measures, the encouraging headlines sit alongside figures that suggest the full potential of disadvantaged young people, and young men, to benefit from higher education is not yet being fully realised.

Higher Education Providers

We might expect that this year's entry topping half a million students for the first time will be a headline story, and it certainly represents a settling of nerves following the tuition fee rises in England in 2012. But it is not 'back to normal' for providers – they are working harder than ever for these entrants – 1.8 million offers made, up 6 per cent this year, as offer rates push to highs, and universities and colleges are acutely conscious that their offers are increasingly having to compete against four others.

However, with 30 of the larger universities still recruiting at levels 15 per cent or more below 2011-12, the sector-wide picture is being experienced in divergent ways at institutional level. The Government set out to create a market in higher education (in England) and that has undoubtedly happened. Without the protection from market forces afforded by the allocation of demand to a fixed distribution of places through the Student Number Control, we might see further polarisation between the 'winners' and 'losers' in the market.

With the acceptance rate staying level with 2013 and an increase in recruitment through both the insurance and the Clearing route, the 2014 cycle analysis does indicate a return to focus on the quality of intake by some institutions who were more intent on maintaining or growing numbers in the previous two cycles.

But the 18 year old UK population is set to continue its downward trend, with the numbers of young people presenting to HE and holding A levels appearing to track the population down; growth in demand for HE is largely coming from those holding vocational qualifications such as BTECs. At the same time, the appetite for higher education against an improving employment picture and increased apprenticeship places is going to be tested and may result in some slowing of demand growth as young people feel they have more options after secondary education.

Higher education providers will be heartened by the good news in this report. But they are also likely to continue increasing the attention they give to providing a demonstrably beneficial experience for students so they have strong appeal in what looks set to be a very competitive market for student recruitment.

We hope that this report is a useful resource for those involved in higher education and we welcome any feedback on ways that we might strengthen it in the future.

Please email communications@ucas.ac.uk to give us your views, suggestions and queries.



Mary Curnock Cook

Chief Executive

Structure of the report

This report is divided into three sections. The first section summarises the key findings. The second provides an analysis of selected aspects of the 2014 cycle. The third is a series of reference tables.

The second section begins with an overview of the key applicant, acceptance and acceptance rate statistics, covering different applicant domiciles, age groups and provider countries. Trends in the entry rates of the young population are reported, from countries, regions and parliamentary constituencies of the UK.

The trends in total number of offers received by different groups of applicants are investigated, together with an analysis of patterns of offer-making by providers. The level and outcomes to providers of making unconditional offers to applicant that are most likely to be waiting for results of qualifications is described.

A number of aspects of the cycle that have a bearing on outcomes for applicants and providers are examined, including the trends by acceptance route, an investigation of the processes that lead to applicants being placed through their insurance choice and the patterns of change in outcomes between A level results day and the close of the cycle.

How the national trends translate to outcomes for different groups of providers are assessed by looking at patterns of variation in provider level recruitment in recent cycles, including the qualifications held by accepted applicants. Qualifications, including predicted qualifications, are central in understanding entry to higher education and recent trends in these are set out for the large and more uniform group of English 18 year old applicants.

Changes in the outcomes for people from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds are analysed through entry rates by area-based and individual-based measures of background. A similar analysis is reported by sex and ethnic group, together with the relationship between these and background.

The reference table section provides the core figures behind the cycle and includes comparable figures for five cycles (2010 to 2014) where this is possible.

A glossary of key terms concludes this report.

Notes to the report

In 2014 there have been fewer very late acceptances than in previous 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 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 will not give an accurate measure of change.

For people living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland UCAS covers the overwhelming majority of full-time undergraduate provision 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 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 that part of full-time undergraduate study that uses UCAS.

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.

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Section 1

Key findings

UCAS

Applicants and Acceptances

For the first time over half a million people placed in higher education through UCAS

In the 2014 cycle, 512,400 applicants were placed in higher education through UCAS, the first time the service has placed over half a million people. There were 16,800 more applicants placed in 2014 than in 2013, an increase of 3.4 per cent.

The increase in acceptances is a result of a similar increase in applicants (3.3 per cent to 699,700). The acceptance rate (the proportion of applicants who are placed by the end of the cycle), is unchanged at 73.2 per cent.

More acceptances from both within and outside the UK

Acceptances from the UK increased to 447,500 in 2014, up 13,800 (3.2%) from 2013 and the highest number placed through UCAS.

Acceptances from the EU increased by 1,900 (7.6 per cent) to 26,400 – through a combination of both more applicants and a relatively large increase in the acceptance rate (by 1.7 percentage points to 56.3 per cent).

Applicants from countries outside the EU increased by 5.7 per cent to 74,600. The acceptance rate for these applicants fell by 1.4 percentage points to 51.7 per cent, continuing a decline from 2006. But the increase in applicants was sufficient to offset this fall and acceptances increased to 38,500 (+1,100, +2.8 per cent), the highest number of accepted applicants from these countries.

Acceptance increase for all age groups, 25 and over by 9 per cent to a new high of 52,300

There have been increases in the number of placed applicants from all age groups in the UK to the highest recorded levels. Acceptances from the 18 and 19 year old age groups have increased by around 2 per cent, despite a falling population. The proportional increases in acceptances from older age groups were larger, increasing by 4.1 per cent to 80,000 for 20-24 year olds and, for those aged 25 and over, 8.6 per cent to 52,300.

Largest increases in 2014 are for English acceptances and to English providers

Placed applicants from England increased by 14,600 (+4.0 per cent) to 382,500, the highest number placed through UCAS and nearly a third larger than the number placed in 2006. Higher education providers in England also had the largest increase in acceptances in 2014; 16,600 (+4.0 per cent) to 433,200, the most ever placed by UCAS at English providers.

There were smaller increases in acceptances from Wales (+2.6 per cent to 20,200) and to Welsh providers (+1.7 per cent to 26,000).

Acceptances from Northern Ireland fell slightly to 14,500 (-0.7 per cent), but remain higher than any cycle other than 2013. Acceptances to provider in Northern Ireland increased to 11,300 (+2.7 per cent), the highest number placed by UCAS at providers in Northern Ireland.

Entry rates for young people

18 year olds living in England and Wales more likely than ever to enter Higher Education

The proportion of the 18 year old population who entered higher education increased by over one percentage point in both England (30.4 per cent) and Wales (27.1 per cent). In both countries these entry rates, calculated using the latest revised population estimates, represent the highest ever proportion of young people entering higher education.

Entry rates for 18 year olds living in Northern Ireland fell by around 1 percentage point to 34.8 per cent.

Entry rates for 18 year olds in England have shown the largest increases in recent cycles. 18 year olds in England are 6 per cent more likely to enter higher education in 2014 than they were in 2011, and 23 per cent more likely than they were in 2006.

Entry rates vary by region and parliamentary constituency

Within England 18 year old entry rates in 2014 range from 26.7 per cent in the South West region to 34.8 per cent in the London region. Young people in London are 30 per cent more likely to enter higher education in 2014 than they were in 2006, the largest increase of any region in this period.

The 650 parliamentary constituencies in the UK show a finer detail geography of entry rates. They also show a wider range of entry rates with some constituencies having fewer than 15 per cent of 18 year olds enter higher education in 2014 and others having 50 per cent of 18 year olds enter.

There have also been a range of changes in entry rates since 2006. In around 40 parliamentary constituencies across England, Wales and Northern Ireland have lower entry rates in 2014 than 2006, and there are around 60 constituencies with entry rates in 2014 that are, proportionally, 50 per cent or more higher than in 2006.

18 year olds more likely than ever to enter higher education holding BTEC qualifications

The proportion of the 18 year old population in England who entered higher education and held a BTEC qualification increased to 6.7 per cent in 2014. This is the highest entry rate holding BTECs recorded; 18 year olds in England are 20 per cent more likely to enter HE holding a BTEC than last year, and around 120 per cent more likely than they were in 2006.

The proportion of 18 year olds entering higher education and holding A levels also increased (by 1.5 per cent proportionally) to reach 25.0 per cent, the highest level recorded.

Entry rates holding BTECs equal by background but vary across England

The entry rate holding BTECs has increased for young people from all backgrounds in 2014. There are relatively small differences in entry rates by background, ranging from 5 to 7 per cent in 2014.

There is large variation in entry rates holding BTECs across England – in constituencies where BTEC entry rates are high, 18 year olds are over ten times more likely to enter holding BTECs compared to constituencies where BTEC entry rates are low.

The acceptance rate for 18 year old English applicants holding BTECs has increased by 1.2 percentage points to 82.2 per cent, the highest level recorded, but this remains below the acceptance rate for those holding A levels (86.5 per cent).

Over 40 per cent of young people in England enter higher education by age 19

The proportion of young people who enter higher education by the time they are aged 19 has increased to record levels for England (40.5 per cent), Northern Ireland (43.9 per cent) and Wales (35.1 per cent).

These increases were driven both by higher 18 year old entry rates in 2013 and continuing increases in the 19 year old entry rate to record levels in each country in 2014.

Entry rates by ethnic group and sex

Entry rates increase for all ethnic groups in 2014 but large differences remain between groups

The entry rate for English 18 year olds from state schools increased for all ethnic groups in 2014 by between one and two percentage points.

The lowest entry rate in 2014 was for pupils in the White ethnic group (27 per cent). The rates for pupils from most ethnic groups lie in a range from 27 per cent (White ethnic group) to 39 per cent (Asian ethnic group). The entry rate for pupils in the Chinese ethnic group is higher at 54 per cent.

The largest increase in entry rates over the period was for pupils in the Black ethnic group, their entry rate increased from 21 per cent in 2006 to 34 per cent in 2014, a proportional increase of over 60 per cent.

Young women a third more likely to enter higher education than young men

Young women are around a third more likely to enter higher education than men in 2014, a similar proportional difference to recent cycles.

Entry rates for 18 year olds increased in 2014 for both men and women. The increase for men was 0.8 percentage points to 25.8 per cent. The increase for women was 1.2 percentage points to 34.1 per cent.

This proportional difference is similar to recent cycles but the percentage point difference in entry rates between men and women has increased to over 8 percentage points, the largest ever.

This difference in 18 year old entry rates between men and women equates to 32,000 fewer 18 year old men entering higher education this year than would be the case if men had the same entry rate as women.

Women more likely to enter than men across the UK, especially so for disadvantaged areas

In 2014, 18 year old women were more likely to enter higher education than men in 98 per cent of parliamentary constituencies across the UK. In almost a quarter of constituencies women are at least 50 per cent more likely to enter than men.

In the most disadvantaged areas, the entry rate in 2014 for 18 year olds was 15 per cent for men and 22 per cent for women, making women around 50 per cent more likely to enter than men.

In England, women who received free school meals are around 50 per cent more likely to enter higher education aged 18 than men who received free school meals

Entry rates for advantaged and disadvantaged groups

Entry rates for disadvantaged jump by over 10 per cent to highest ever levels across the UK

Young people living in most disadvantaged fifth of areas became more likely to enter higher education in 2014 with entry rates reaching their highest ever levels across the UK.

In England the entry rate for disadvantaged 18 year olds increased by 1.7 percentage points (11 per cent proportionally) to 18.2 per cent making disadvantaged young people in England a third more likely to enter university in 2014 than five years ago. Entry rates for this group in England have increased every cycle since 2006 and they are now 60 per cent more likely to enter higher education than in 2006.

In Northern Ireland the entry rate increased by 1.7 percentage points (11 per cent) and in Wales by 3.0 percentage points (22 per cent).

In all three countries the change in 2014 is the largest increase recorded.

Differences in entry rates between advantaged and disadvantaged fall to a new low

Entry rates for 18 year olds living in advantaged areas have not increased by as much as for those in disadvantaged areas, reducing the differences in entry rates between the groups to new lows across the UK.

In England and Wales advantaged 18 year olds are around two and an half times more likely to enter higher education than disadvantaged 18 year olds, down from almost four times more likely in 2006.

Pupils who received free school meals more likely than ever to enter higher education

In England the 18 year olds who had previously received free school meals became 8 per cent more likely to enter higher education with their entry rate increasing to 15 per cent.

These pupils are now a third more likely to enter higher education than five years ago.

Differences in entry by background remain largest for higher tariff institutions

For 18 year olds in England the entry rates to higher tariff institutions range from 3.2 per cent for the most disadvantaged fifth of areas to 21.3 per cent for the most advantaged fifth of areas. These are the highest entry rates recorded for each group

Entry rates to medium tariff institutions in 2014 ranged from 5.2 per cent for the most disadvantaged to 13.4 per cent for the most advantaged. For lower tariff institutions entry rates by background all lie within a narrow range between 10 and 12 per cent.

Disadvantaged 40 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff than three years ago

Young people in the most disadvantaged areas became 13 per cent more likely to enter a higher tariff institution in 2014. The proportional increase from other less advantaged areas through to the most advantaged areas is much lower at between one and three per cent.

Young people from the most disadvantaged areas in 2014 were around 40 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff institutions than three years ago. This is the greatest proportional increases for any background and has been reducing the proportional differences in entry by background.

Advantaged seven times more likely to enter higher tariff compared to nine times in 2006

In 2014 young people from the most advantaged areas were just under seven times more likely to enter these institutions than young people in the most disadvantaged areas. This is a reduction from over nine times more likely in 2006.

The low entry rate for the most disadvantaged group means that entry rates have increased by less than a percentage point over this period (from 2.3 per cent to 3.2 per cent) compared to over two percentage points for the most advantaged group.

Offer-making

Providers increase offer-making by over 100,000 (6 per cent) to a record 1.8 million offers

Providers made 1.8 million offers to main scheme applicants in 2014, 101,400 (5.9 per cent) more than 2013 and the second consecutive cycle of substantial increases in offers.

Applications from UK and EU applicants became two to three percent more likely to receive offers from providers in 2014. Offer rates to applications from 18 year olds increased to 75.3 per cent and for applications from 19 year olds to 65.1 per cent. Providers are 10-15 per cent more likely to make offers to applications from all age groups in 2014 than they were in 2011.

Offer rates from providers to applications from UK 18 year olds have increased. Across the UK the largest increase has been from providers in Scotland where offer rates have increased by 2.7 percentage points to 63.1 per cent in 2014. The increase in offer making is similar (two to three percentage points) for applications across the UK and the offer rates to applications from England (64 per cent), Scotland (64 per cent) and Wales (63 per cent) remain very similar to each other.

137,300 UK and EU applicants receive five offers, an increase of 9 per cent to a new high

The total number of UK and EU main scheme applicants who made five choices increased by 4 per cent in 2014, though still remain below 2011 cycle levels. The number of these applicants receiving at least one offer increased by 5 per cent (+19,300) to 389,500, this is close to the high in 2011. The increase in applicants holding offers is slightly less than the increase in offers made to this group (+6 per cent) because of the increasing concentration of offers on those applicants who receive many offers.

The number of UK and EU main scheme applicants receiving offers to all five of their applications increased by 9 per cent (11,600) to 137,300, the highest recorded total and 48 per cent higher than in 2011. The number of applicants receiving no offers from any of their five applications decreased by 4 per cent (-1,400) from the 2013 cycle to 33,300 - 26 per cent below 2011 (of 45,000).

More UK and EU applicants receive multiple offers, half have four or more, a third have five

In 2014, 92 per cent of UK and EU applicants who made five choices received at least one offer and 55 per cent of these applicants received four or five offers (2 percentage points higher than in 2013). The proportion having the maximum five offers increased to 32 per cent in 2014, the highest level recorded.

UK and EU applicants are 26 per cent more likely to have five offers in 2014 than in 2012, and 52 per cent more likely than in 2011.

Offers increase across a wide range of A level grades, highest share ever get five offers

Offer rates to applications from 18 year old English applicants with predicted A level grades increased for each grade profile between BCC and A*A*A*. The large majority of these applicants make five choices – and nearly all of these applicants receive at least one offer ranging from 97.0 per cent for those predicted BCC to 99.6 per cent of those predicted A*A*A*.

The proportion of these applicants receiving offers from all five of their choices increased to new highest recorded values for each grade profile. The applicants most likely to receive five offers were those predicted AAB (62.6 per cent with five offers) or ABB (61.9 per cent).

Unconditional offers to 18 year old applicants increase in 2014 but remain below 2 per cent

Unconditional offers from a provider are mostly made to those who already hold qualifications. A small number of unconditional offers are recorded as being made to 18 year old applicants ahead of them being awarded most of their qualifications.

The number of these offers in 2014 was around 12,000, representing around 1.4 per cent of all offers made to these applicants. This is around four times higher than in 2013 and higher than the 3,000 to 7,000 range recorded in the period 2006-2013.

Unconditional offers are not materially preferred by applicants choosing between offers

Providers who have been using unconditional offers to 18 year olds for the first time in 2014 do not appear to have become more likely to be chosen as firm or insurance by applicants.

The proportion of their offers to 18 year olds that are chosen as firm or insurance in 2014 is not materially different from what might be expected from the trend and variability in these replies before they started using unconditional offers.

Admission routes

Record numbers of applicants get into their firm 'first' choice

The majority of applicants are placed at the offer they set as their firm choice,. In 2014, 372,200 applicants were placed at their firm choice, 73 per cent of all acceptances. This is an increase of 8,900 (2.5 per cent) from 2013 and the highest number ever placed by UCAS through this route.

The number of applicants placed at their insurance choice increased by 11.8 per cent (+3,900) to 36,700. This is higher than recent cycles but below levels seen in 2010 and 2011.

Over 60,000 placed through Clearing for the first time

Main scheme applicants who are placed through the Clearing process increased by over 5,000 (+12.3 per cent) to 47,500, the highest number of main scheme applicants placed by this route.

Applicants who apply later and are accepted directly through the Clearing process fell for the first time in three years to 13,800 (a fall of 1,000, -6.8 per cent).

The total placed through both Clearing routes was 61,300, an increase of 4,200 (7.4 per cent) from 2013 and the highest number ever placed through the Clearing routes.

Record numbers set an Insurance choice, tracking the rising numbers getting two or more offers

It is only possible for applicants to set an insurance choice if they receive two or more offers. More applicants were eligible to set an insurance choice in 2014, driven by the rise in applicants holding five offers.

Most applicants eligible to set an insurance choice do so, around 85 per cent, and applicants are more likely to set an insurance offer if they have several offers to choose between, rising to 94 per cent for those who had five offers in total.

There was an increase of 11,000 to 318,600 in those setting an insurance choice in 2014 – the highest number recorded - driven by an increase in those setting an insurance choice from four or five offers.

Over 100,000 considered by their insurance as proportion not placed at firm rises to 32 per cent

The number of applicants holding an insurance choice that were not placed at their firm choice increased in 2014 to 102,000 (+11,300, +12.4 per cent).

The proportion of applicants holding an insurance choice that were not placed through their firm choice, and so considered by their insurance choice provider, increased from 30 per cent to 32 per cent in 2014, the highest level since 2011.

The proportion of the applicants considered by their insurance provider who go on to be placed at the insurance provider was 35 per cent, similar to the previous cycle.

Applicants continue to use multiple routes to secure places after A level results

A small number of applicants who are placed at their firm choice on A level results day subsequently do not take up that place. In 2014 around 5 per cent of 18 year old applicants placed at their firm choice on A level results day did not go to that provider. The proportion was higher, around 22 per cent, for those placed at their insurance choice. These rates are similar to those seen in cycles after 2012.

The majority of applicants who did not take up their firm place in 2014 are unplaced at the end of the cycle. Around 3,300 (around 2 per cent of those placed at their firm choice) are placed at another provider by the end of the cycle – around 80 per cent of these through Clearing and 20 per cent through adjustment.

The applicants who did not take up their insurance choice in 2014 most, 2,300 in 2014 (13 per cent of those placed at their insurance choice on results day) majority are placed at another institution through Clearing.

Applicants are more likely to not take up the place they have on A level results day if they made their firm or insurance choice from a smaller number of offers.

Recruitment by provider type

Recruitment to 2014-15 increases to all provider types, higher tariff providers at record levels

Providers can be grouped by average qualification level of their acceptances. In 2014 recruitment of UK and EU applicants to the 2014-15 entry year increased by between two and four per cent for all providers types.

Recruitment to higher tariff providers increased by 3,600 (3.3 per cent) to 115,100, the highest ever level of recruitment for this group. Recruitment to medium tariff providers increased by 2,800 (2.0 per cent) to 144,400. The largest increase in 2014 was for lower tariff providers, 8,200 (4.1 per cent) to 210,000.

Acceptance rates to higher tariff providers by A level grade similar in 2014 to 2013

Applicants with higher A level grade profiles are more likely to enter higher tariff providers. The proportion of applicants entering higher tariff providers by each A level grade profile is similar in 2014 to 2013, in contrast to the increases in the proportion entering higher tariff providers by grade profile between 2011 and 2013.

The proportions of applicants entering other types of provider by grade profile is also similar to 2013.

Increase to 20 per cent of 18 year old acceptances at lower tariff holding ABB+ qualifications

At English institutions the proportion of 18 year English acceptances holding ABB+ has decreased at higher tariff providers (to 82 per cent), but by less than in recent cycles.

The proportion of 18 year old English acceptances at lower tariff providers who hold ABB+ qualifications has increased in 2014 to 20 per cent, the highest value recorded, driven by acceptances holding ABB+ from BTEC qualifications.



Section 2

Analytical
overview of the
2014 cycle

UCAS

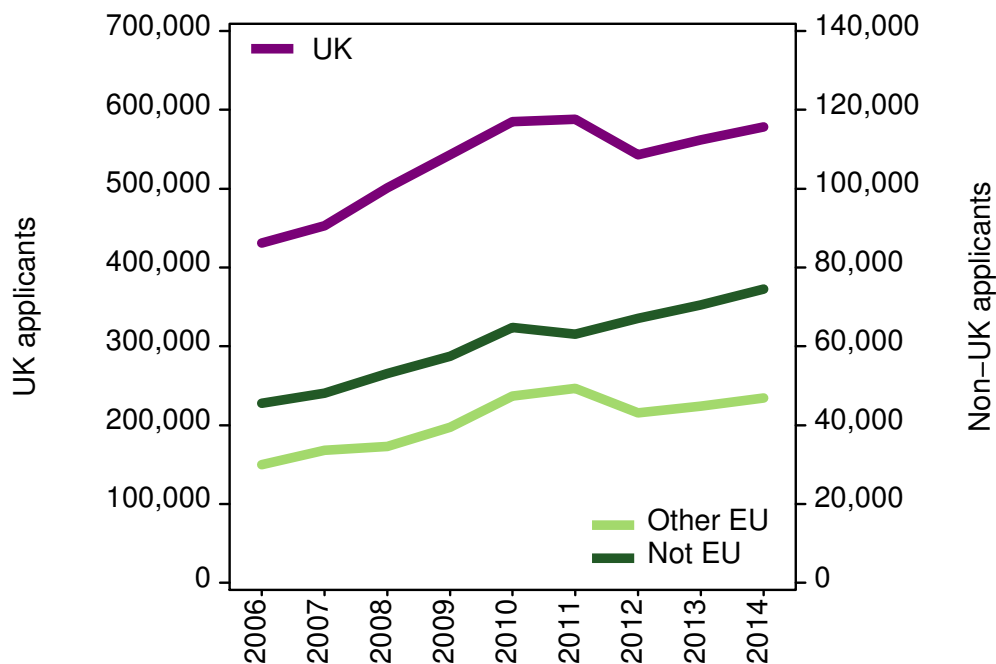
Applicants

More applicants from all domiciles in 2014

There were 699,700 applicants in the 2014 cycle, 22,300 more than in the 2013 cycle, an increase of 3.3 per cent. This builds on an increase of 23,700 in the 2013 cycle, resulting in around the same number of applicants as the 2010 and 2011 cycles (+2,300 compared with 2010, -500 compared with 2011).

The large majority of applicants are domiciled in the UK (578,300, 83 per cent of all applicants, in the 2014 cycle). There was an increase of 16,300 (+2.9 per cent) UK domiciled applicants in 2014. Applicants from the EU increased in 2014 by 2,000 (+4.5 per cent) to 46,800. Applicants from countries outside of the EU increased in 2014 by 4,000 (+5.7 per cent) to 74,600, continuing the increase seen in each cycle since 2011 and reaching a new high in 2014.

Figure 1 Applicants by domicile group



Acceptances

There were 512,400 applicants accepted to start higher education from the 2014 cycle, 16,800 (+3.4 per cent) more than in the 2013 cycle. For the second year running, this is the highest number of acceptances recorded in any cycle and is more than 500,000 for the first time.

UK domiciled acceptances increased to a record number in the 2014 cycle

Most acceptances are from the UK, typically between 87 to 88 per cent of the total. In 2014, there were 447,500 acceptances from the UK, up 13,800 (+3.2 per cent), a smaller increase than from the 2012 cycle to the 2013 cycle but still resulting in the highest number of acceptances of UK domiciled applicants from any cycle.

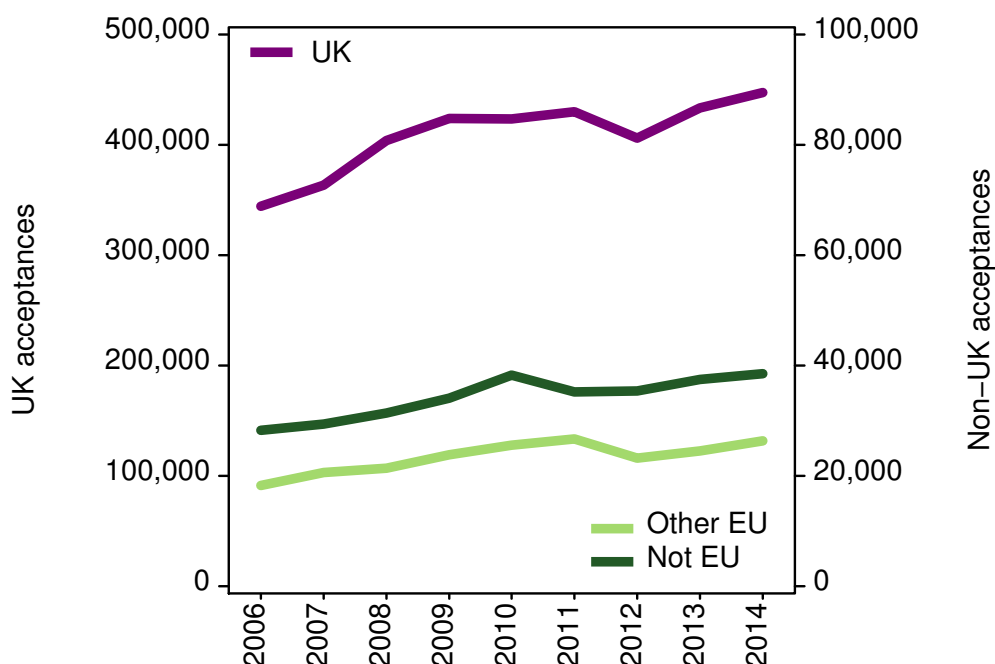
Acceptances from other countries in the EU increased in 2014

EU domiciled acceptances form around 5 per cent of acceptances and increased each cycle from 18,300 in 2006 to 26,700 in 2011. In 2012, the number of EU domiciled acceptances fell by 3,500 (-13.0 per cent) to 23,200, the lowest total since the 2008 cycle. Acceptances from the EU increased in both 2013 (+1,300, +5.5 per cent) and 2014 (+1,900, +7.6 per cent) to 26,400, only 300 fewer than the high in the 2011 cycle.

Acceptances from outside the EU increased to new high

Around 7 to 8 per cent of acceptances are from applicants outside the EU. Their numbers increased between 2006 and 2010 before falling by 3,000 (-7.9 per cent) in 2011. In 2012, there was a small increase (+0.5 per cent) in acceptances, and in 2013 there was a greater increase (+5.8 per cent). In 2014, 38,500 applicants from outside the EU were accepted (+1100, +2.8 per cent), the highest number recorded in any cycle.

Figure 2 Acceptances by domicile group



Acceptances from all UK domiciled age groups at record levels

Around half of UK domiciled acceptances are from 18 year old applicants. In 2014, there were 224,600 acceptances from UK 18 year olds, +5,200 (+2.4 per cent) the most acceptances ever recorded.

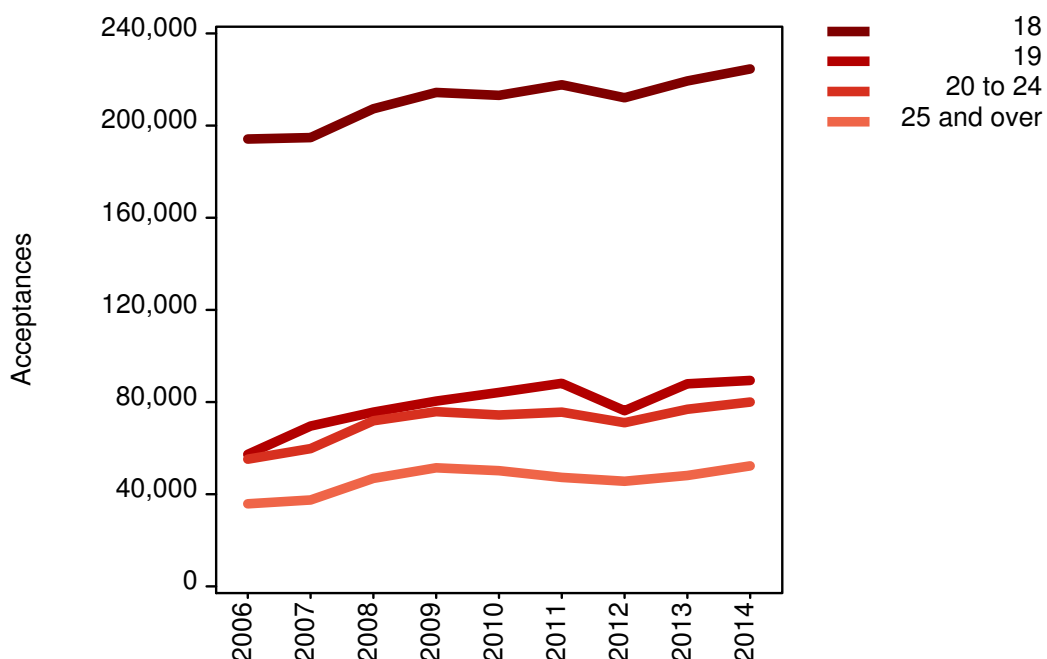
Acceptances from 19 year old applicants are usually around a fifth of all UK domiciled acceptances. More than any other aged applicant, 19 year old applications and acceptances are more dependent on the application rate and acceptance rate observed in the previous cycle. In 2013, there was a sharp increase in acceptances of UK 19 year olds following a similar size fall in the previous cycle. In 2014, the number of acceptances increased again by 1,400 (+1.6 per cent) to 89,300 the highest recorded for 19 year old applicants.

The highest proportional increases in acceptances in 2014 are for the two older age groups.

20-24 year old acceptances are around 18 per cent of all UK domiciled acceptances. In 2014, there were 80,000 20-24 year old acceptances, 3,200 (+4.1 per cent) more than in 2013 and the highest recorded for this age group.

Around 11 to 12 per cent of all UK domiciled acceptances are from applicants aged 25 or over. The number of acceptances from this age group decreased in each of the 2010, 2011 and 2012 cycles, following increases in the 2008 and 2009 cycles. This trend was reversed in 2013 when the number of acceptances increased. In 2014, there was another increase to 52,300 acceptances aged 25 and over, 4,100 (+8.6 per cent) more than in 2013, and the most seen in any cycle.

Figure 3 UK acceptances by age group



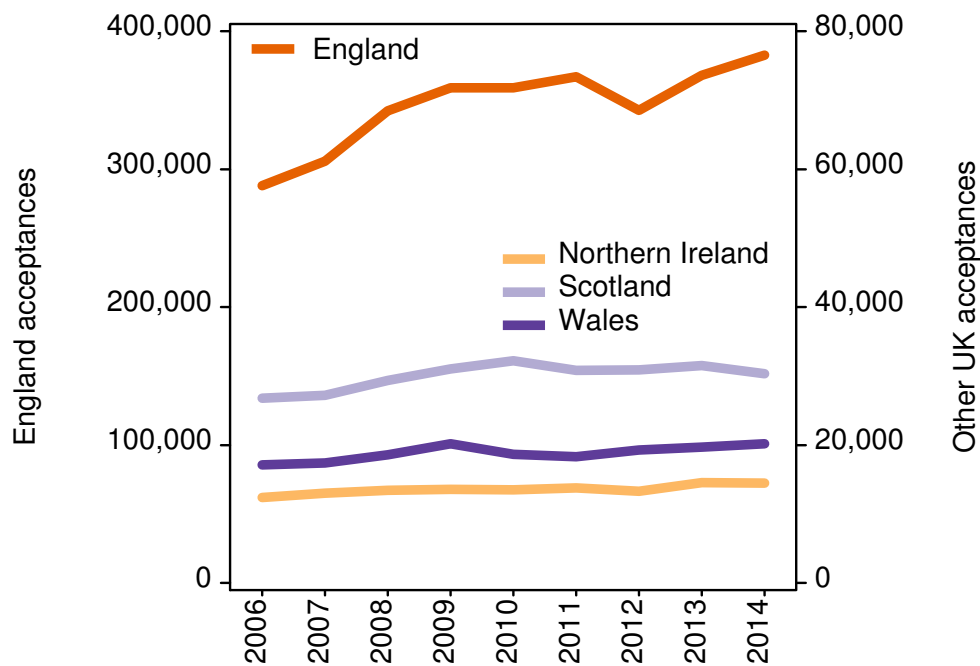
Most acceptances ever recorded from England, near high for Wales and Northern Ireland

Figure 4 shows acceptances by applicant country of domicile within 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.

Acceptances from England increased from 288,000 to 367,100 between the 2006 and 2011 cycles, accounting for almost all the increase in UK domiciled acceptances over that period. English domiciled acceptances decreased sharply in the 2012 cycle, but were followed in the 2013 cycle by a similar size increase that completely reversed that fall. In 2014, there were 382,500 England domiciled acceptances, 14,600 (+4.0 per cent) more than 2013, the highest number of England domiciled acceptances in any cycle.

Acceptances from Northern Ireland were almost unchanged from the high recorded in 2013, a total of 14,500 in 2014, just 100 (-0.7 per cent) fewer than 2013. Acceptances from Wales increased for the third consecutive cycle to 20,200, an increase of 500 (+2.6 per cent) almost reaching the high recorded in 2009.

Figure 4 Acceptances by UK country of domicile

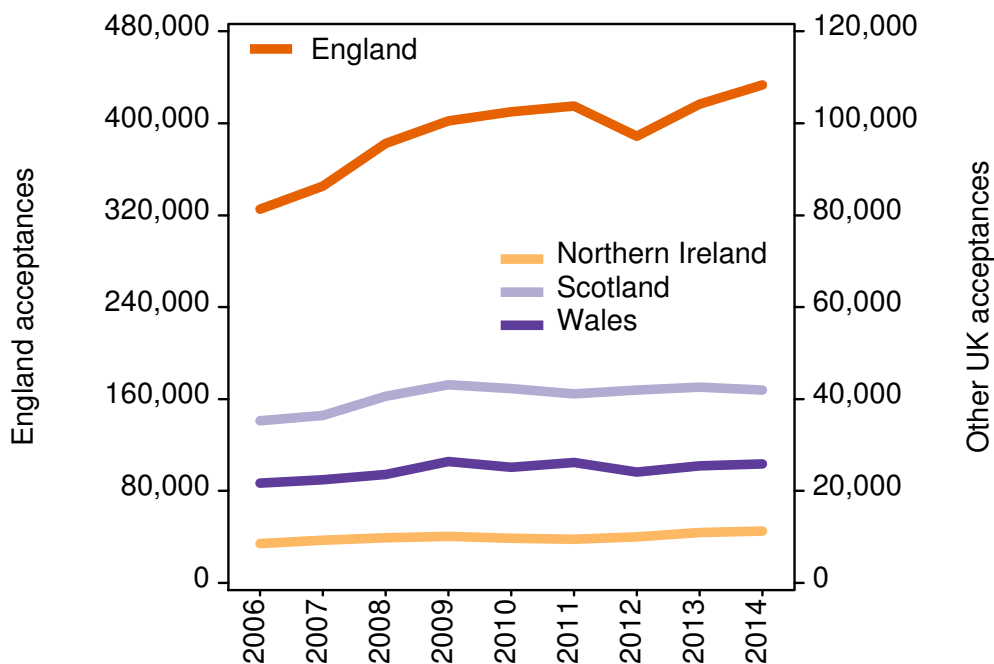


Acceptances to higher education providers in England and Northern Ireland at record level for second consecutive year

Figure 5 shows the number of acceptances by country of higher education provider; since acceptances to providers in England are much larger 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 increased in the 2013 cycle to a record high. A further increase in 2014 resulted in a new record high of 433,200 (+16,600, +4.0 per cent) acceptances to providers in England.

Higher education providers in Northern Ireland had 11,300 (+300, +2.7 per cent) acceptances in 2014, the highest number recorded for the second consecutive cycle. Acceptances to higher education providers in Wales increased to 26,000 (+400, +1.7 per cent), not quite offsetting the decrease in the 2012 cycle, but only 500 fewer than the high in 2009.

Figure 5 Acceptances by provider country



Acceptances for the 2014-15 entry year increased at all types of providers, reaching a new high at higher tariff providers

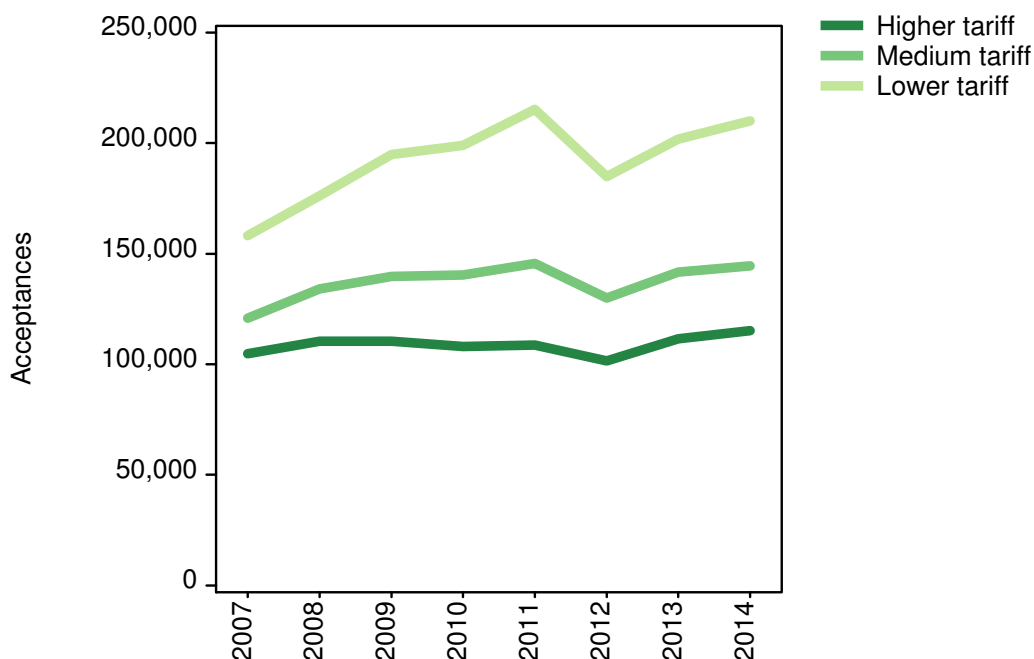
Higher education providers across the UK can be grouped based on the average levels of attainment (summarised through UCAS Tariff points) of a common group of accepted applicants. Figure 6 shows the number of UK and EU domiciled acceptances by academic year of entry (rather than cycle) for these provider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

Over the period between the 2007-08 academic year and the 2011-12 academic year, acceptances to higher tariff group providers varied less than acceptances to medium and lower tariff providers. Over this period acceptances to lower tariff providers typically increased by around 10 per cent proportionally each year, whereas acceptances to higher tariff providers typically stayed at around the same level between years. Acceptances into the 2012-13 academic year fell in all three tariff groups, and by more in the lower tariff group than the medium or higher tariff groups.

Acceptances for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 entry years increased for each of the provider tariff groups, resulting in record levels of acceptances for the higher tariff group in the 2014-15 entry year, near highs for the medium tariff group and the highest level since 2011 for the lower tariff group.

In 2014-15, acceptances to lower tariff providers increased by 8,200 (+4.1 per cent) to 210,000; acceptances to medium tariff providers increased by 2,800 (+2.0 per cent) to 144,400; and acceptances into higher tariff providers increased by 3,600 (+3.3 per cent) to a record high of 115,100.

Figure 6 UK and EU domiciled acceptances for academic year of entry (2014-15 shown as 2014) by provider tariff group



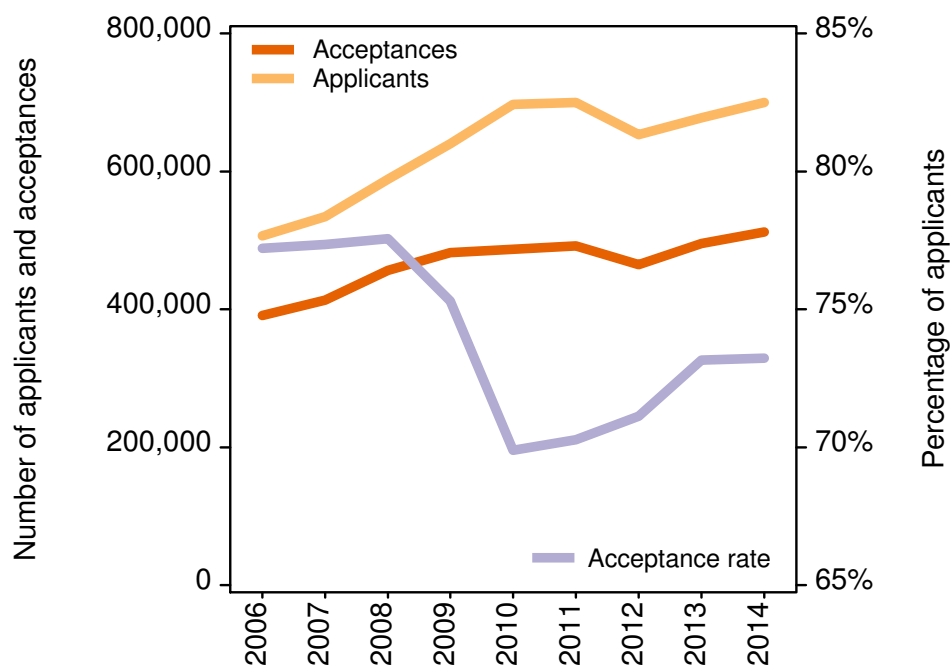
Acceptance rates

The proportion of applicants who have a place at the end of the cycle is termed the acceptance rate. At the UK level it reflects the relationship between total applicants and total acceptances. Since the number of acceptances is often 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, especially for courses where physical or number control capacity limits have not been met.

Acceptance rate remained at same level as 2013, total acceptances increased at the same rate as number of applicants

The acceptance rate for all applicants in 2014 remained at 73 per cent. This consistency between cycles in the acceptance rate coupled with an increase in the number of applicants resulted in an increase in acceptances that is aligned to the increase in applicants. The acceptance rate has still not returned to the level seen between the 2006 and 2008 cycles of between 77 and 78 per cent.

Figure 7 Applicants, acceptances and the acceptance rate

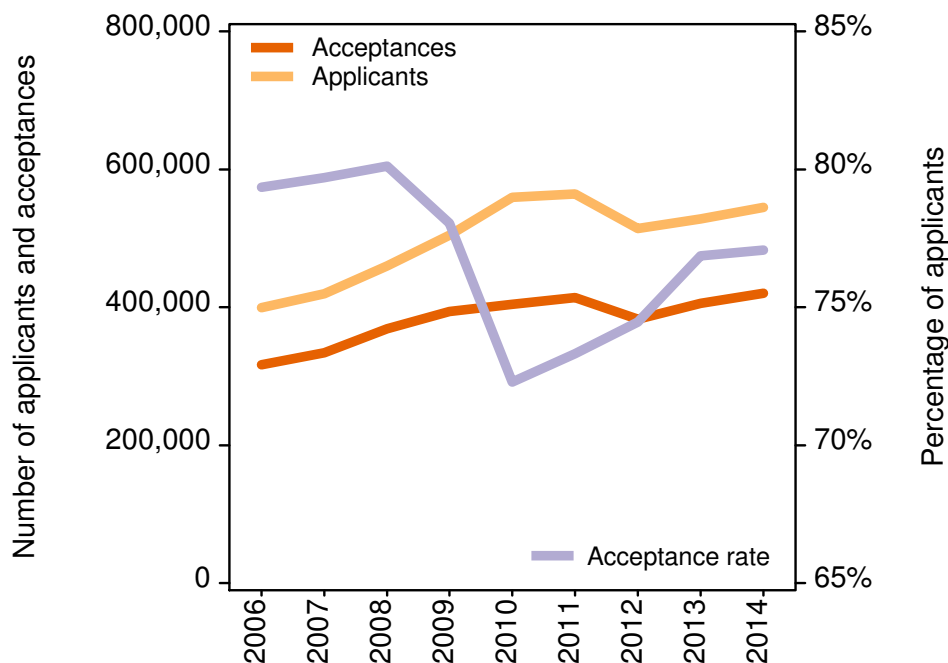


Acceptance rate for UK main scheme applicants at highest since 2010

UK main scheme applicants are the largest group of applicants, typically 78 to 80 per cent of the total. They have broadly similar opportunities within each cycle, making up to five initial applications followed by the opportunity to use other routes later in the cycle. The acceptance rates of this group best reflects the 'difficulty' of gaining admissions to higher education in a particular year.

The acceptance rate for UK main scheme applicants decreased by almost 6 percentage points in 2010 driven by a continuing trend in the increase of applicants that was not matched by the number of acceptances. Between 2011 and 2013 the acceptance rate increased each year, but not by enough to offset the decrease in 2010. In 2014, the acceptance rate remained broadly the same as 2013 at 77.1 per cent (+ 0.2 percentage point change), due to acceptances increasing at the same rate as applicants. The acceptance rate remains 3 percentage points lower than it was in 2007 and 2008.

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



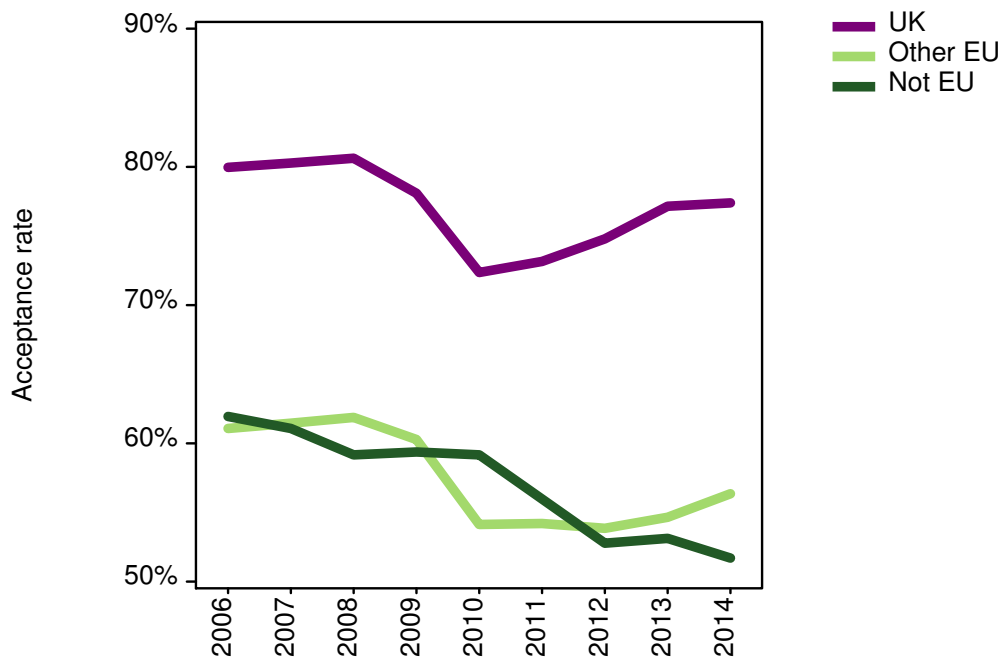
Acceptance rates broadly the same from UK, increased from EU and fell to new low from outside EU

A higher proportion of UK domiciled applicants are accepted than applicants from outside the UK. The acceptance rate for UK domiciled applicants remained broadly the same as 2013 at 77.4 per cent in 2014. Acceptance rates for this group remain below the 80 to 81 per cent values typical between 2006 and 2008.

The acceptance rate for applicants from outside the EU decreased in 2014 to 51.7 per cent (-1.4 percentage points) the lowest rate recorded. This means that non-EU applicants were around 15 per cent less likely to be placed in 2014 than was typical in the 2006 to 2010 cycles. This decrease in acceptance rates means that the increase in the number of applicants from outside the EU does not translate into the same proportional increase in the number of acceptances from outside the EU.

The acceptance rate for EU applicants in 2014 was 56.3 per cent, an increase of 1.7 percentage points and reaching the highest rate since the steep decrease in 2010. Before 2010, the acceptance rate for EU applicants was typically 60 to 62 per cent.

Figure 9 Acceptance rates by applicant domicile group

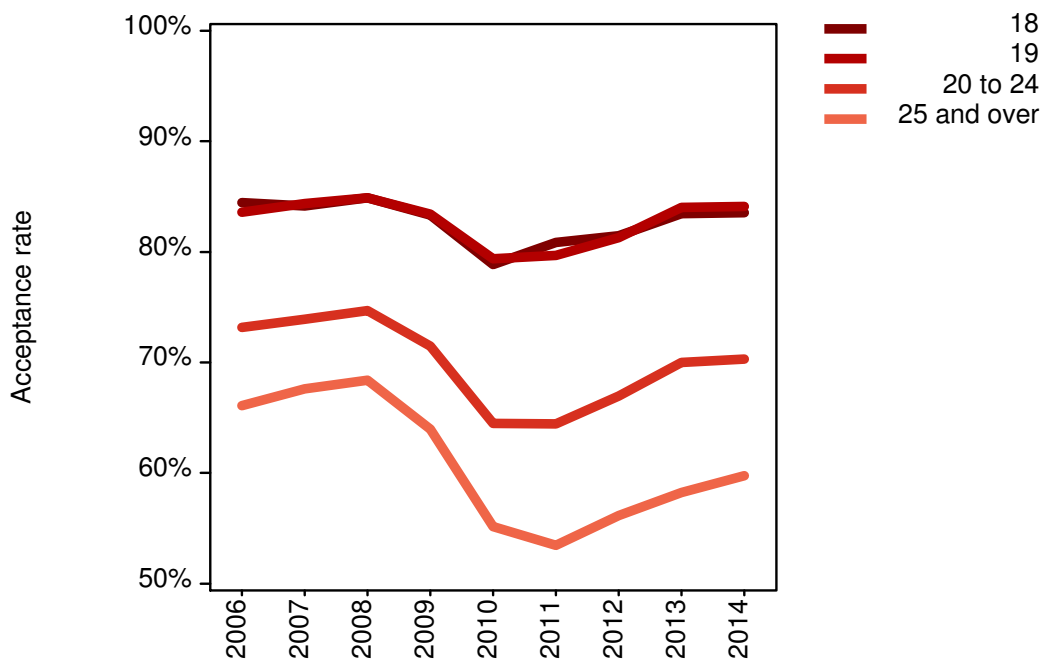


Acceptance rates increased for 25 and over, still lower than earlier cycles

In each cycle the acceptance rate for UK 18 year olds is a very similar level to the acceptance rate for 19 year olds. In 2014, the acceptance rate is 83.6 per cent for 18 year olds (+0.1 percentage points from 2013) and 84.1 per cent for 19 year olds (+0.1 percentage points), remaining close to the acceptance rate typical before 2010 (83 to 85 per cent).

The acceptance rates for older age groups are consistently lower. For 20 to 24 year olds the acceptance rate remains broadly the same in 2014 as 2013 at 70.3 per cent (+0.3 percentage points). This is still lower than the acceptance rate typical before 2010 (72 to 75 per cent). The greatest increase in acceptance rate in 2014 is for those aged 25 and over where the rate increased to 59.7 per cent (+1.5 percentage points). As with the 20 to 24 year old group, this remains lower than the acceptance rate typical before 2010 (64 to 68 per cent).

Figure 10 Acceptance rates for UK domiciled applicants by age group

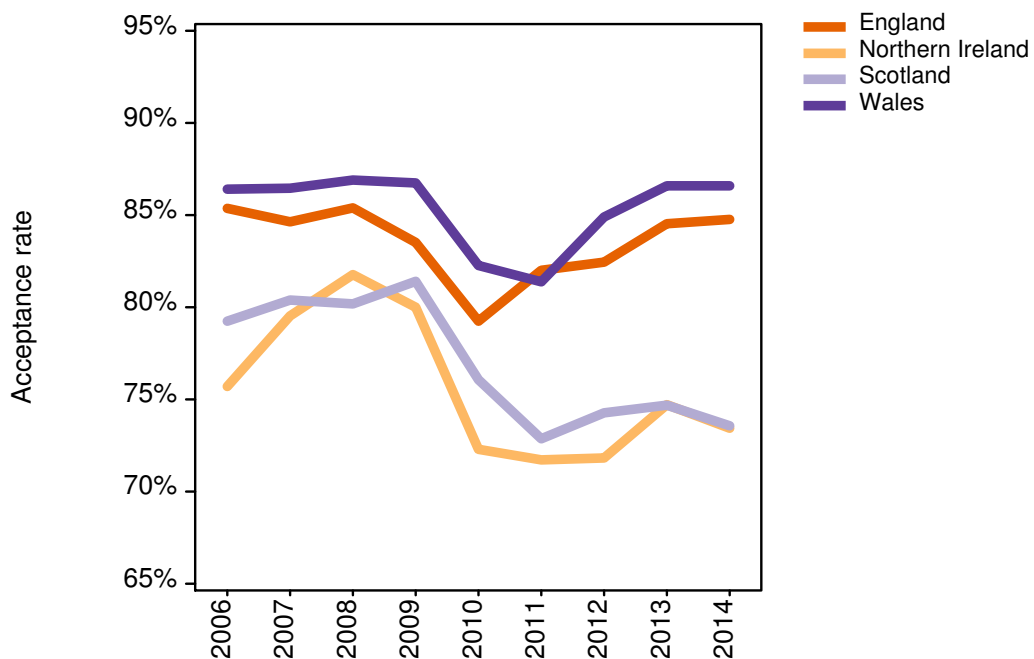


Acceptance rates for 18 year olds in England and Wales were broadly unchanged

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 are 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 2014 were 84.8 per cent and 86.6 per cent respectively, similar to 2013 and very close to rates before 2009. In 2013, acceptance rates for 18 year old applicants from Scotland and Northern Ireland were both 74.7 per cent. In 2014, these rates both fell for the first time since 2011 to 73.6 per cent and 73.4 percent respectively. Acceptance rates for applicants from both of these countries remain lower than values typical before 2010.

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 and Wales are more likely to enter higher education in the 2014 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 within 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. The entry rates used population estimates based on revised ONS population estimates. These revised estimates also cover previous cycles and can result in entry rates for those years being different than published last year.

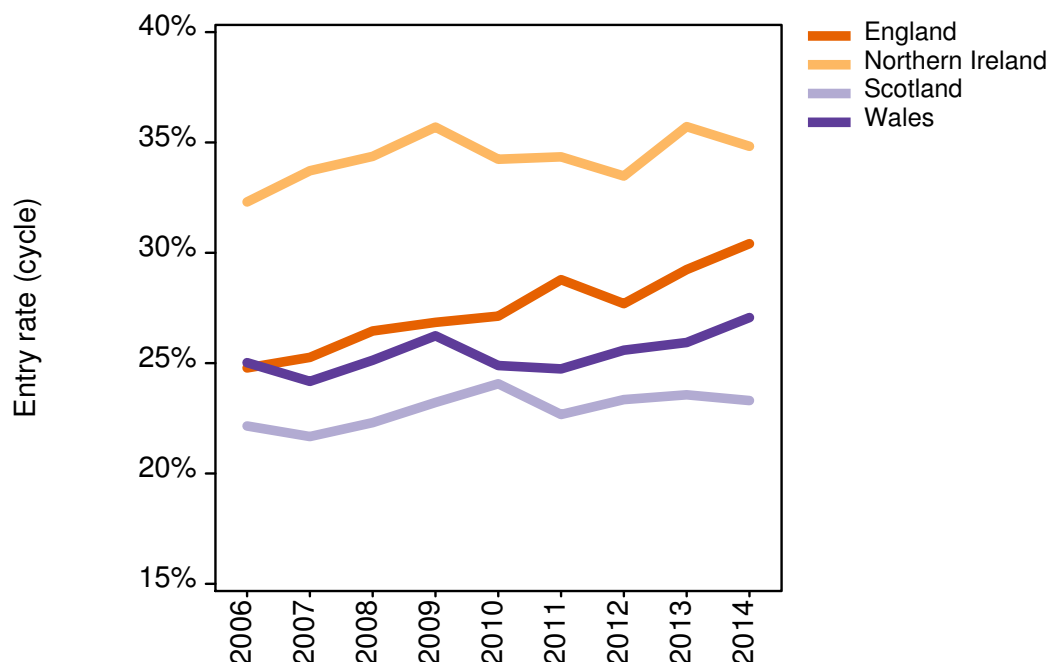
In 2014, 30.4 per cent of the English 18 year old population were accepted into higher education, a 1.2 percentage point increase compared with the 2013 cycle and the highest level recorded for this group of applicants.

The entry rate for 18 year olds in Northern Ireland decreased in the 2014 cycle by around 1 percentage point to 34.8 per cent. Despite the decrease in 2014, the entry rate remained greater than the entry rate recorded between 2010 and 2012.

Entry rates for 18 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 through UCAS. The entry rates for 18 year olds in Scotland decreased slightly in 2014 to 23.3 per cent (-0.2 percentage points), but remained within 1 percentage point of the entry rates recorded between 2009 and 2013.

In Wales, the entry rate increased by 1.1 percentage points to 27.1 per cent, the highest rate seen across the period.

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 England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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 that 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.

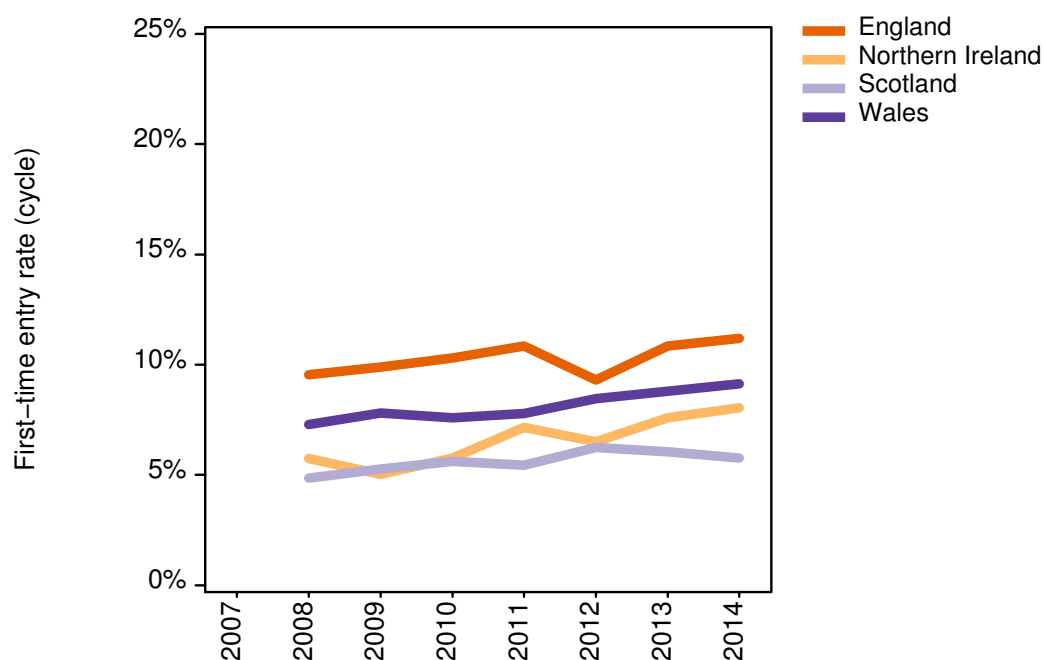
In 2014, the first-time entry rate for 19 year olds from England increased by 0.3 percentage points (a proportional increase of 3.1 per cent) to 11.2 per cent.

For 19 year olds in Northern Ireland, the first-time entry rate for 19 year olds increased by 0.4 percentage points (5.9 per cent proportionally) to a new high of 8.0 per cent.

For 19 year olds in Wales, the rate increased for the fourth successive cycle in 2014 (by 0.3 percentage points, 3.8 per cent proportionally) to the highest record level of 9.1 per cent.

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 through UCAS. A small fall (0.3 percentage points, 4.7 per cent proportionally) for the second successive year in the first-time entry rate for 19 year olds from Scotland left the rate in 2014 at 5.8%.

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, Northern Ireland and Wales

When looking at entry rates for single age groups, changes in entry year can make the interpretation of whether young people are becoming more or less likely to enter higher education difficult. 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 2014, since they are yet to have the opportunity to apply at age 19.

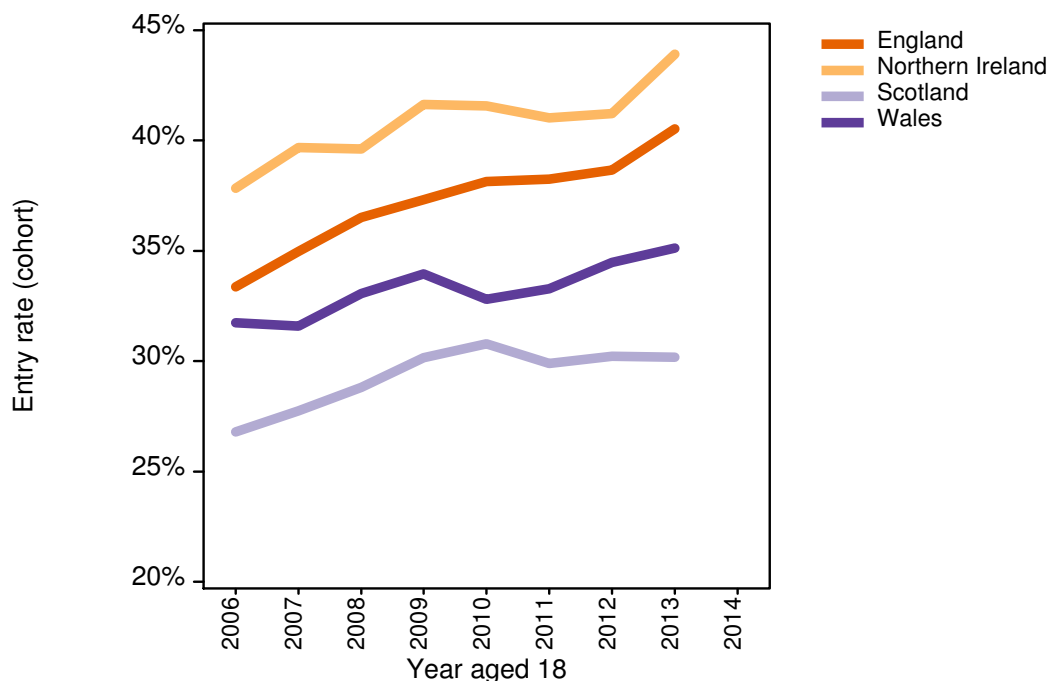
Figure 14 shows the proportion of a young cohort, referenced by the year the cohort would be aged 18, that is accepted for entry aged either 18 or 19.

In England, 40.5 per cent of the cohort aged 18 in 2013 were accepted to enter higher education either at age 18 in 2013 or at age 19 in 2014. This is an increase of 1.9 percentage points (+4.8 per cent proportionally) compared with the cohort aged 18 in 2012. This increase is driven by increases in both the 18 year old entry rate (around 85 per cent of the increase) and the 19 year old entry rate for the cohort.

A similarly steep increase in the cohort entry rate was seen for young people from Northern Ireland, where the entry rate for the cohort aged 18 in 2013 was 43.9 per cent (+2.7 percentage points, +6.6 per cent proportionally). This is the highest rate seen for any young cohort from Northern Ireland.

The entry rate for the 2013 cohort from Wales increased by 0.7 percentage points (+1.9 per cent proportionally) to 35.1 per cent, a new high. The 2013 cohort entry rate for Scotland (lower than on comparable student record measures since not all higher education providers in Scotland uses UCAS) was almost unchanged compared with the entry rate for the cohort aged 18 in 2012, at 30.2 per cent.

Figure 14 Young entry rate (cohort) by country



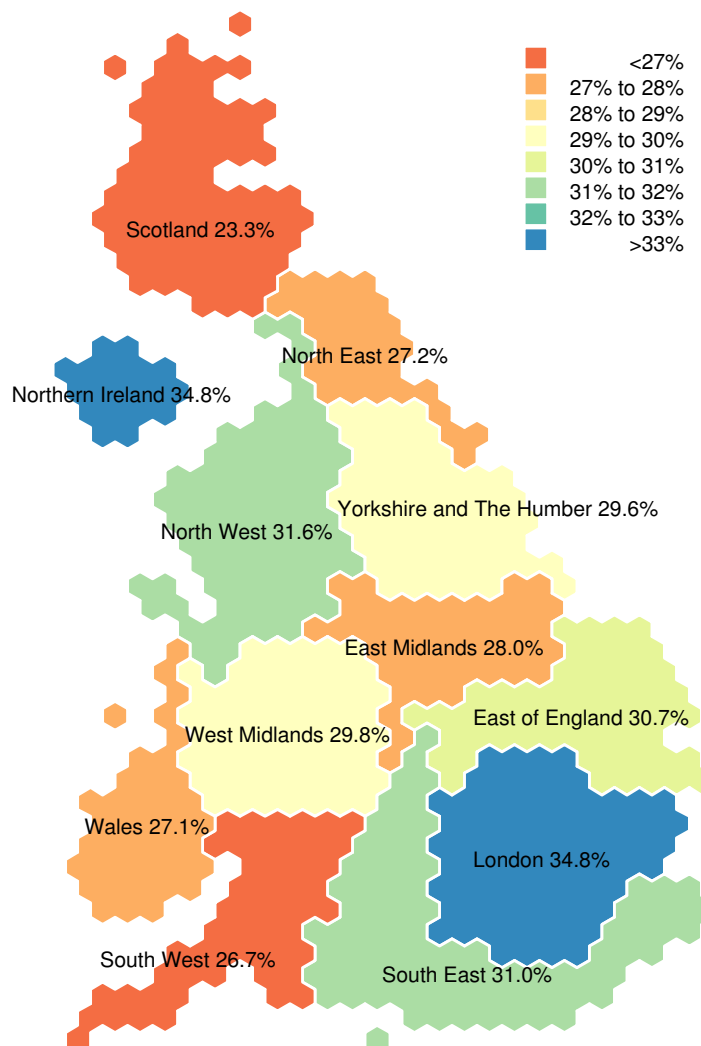
Entry rates by region

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 2014

Figure 15 maps the 2014 entry rates for 18 year olds by region. Amongst these units of English regions and other UK countries, Northern Ireland and London (both 34.8 per cent) have the highest entry rates amongst their 18 year old populations in 2014. Scotland (23.3 per cent, but not all higher education in Scotland recorded), Wales (27.1 per cent), the North East (27.2 per cent) and the South West (26.7 per cent) are the regions with the lowest entry rates in 2014.

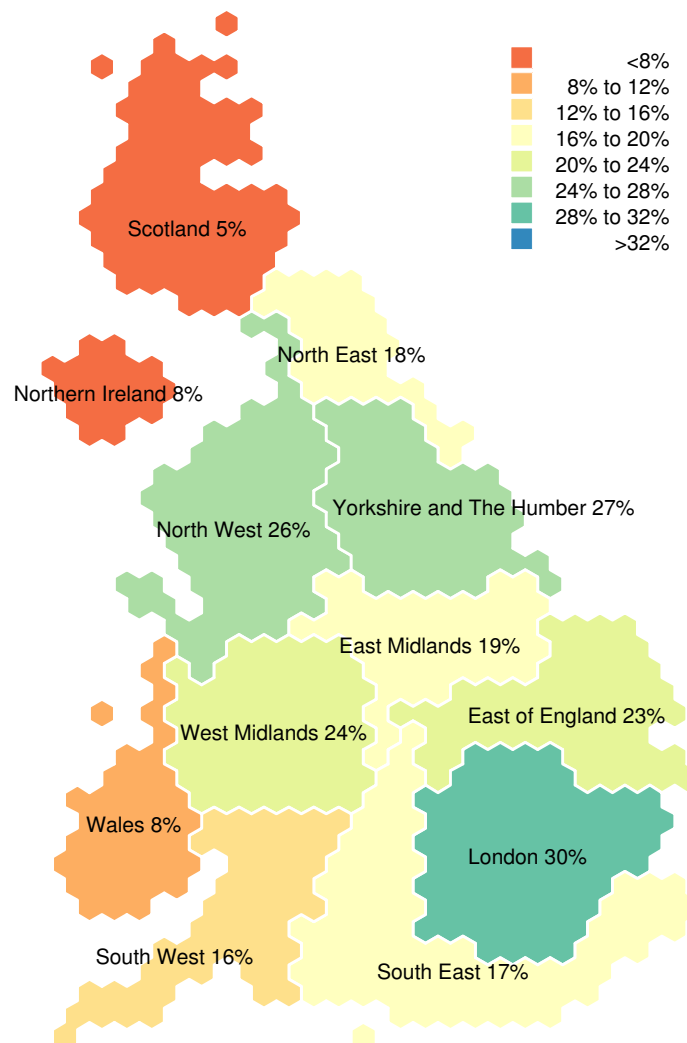
Figure 15 Entry rates in 2014 for UK 18 year olds by region and country



Regions in the North West, Yorkshire and London show largest increases in 18 year old entry rates between 2006 and 2014

The geographical patterns of proportional changes in entry rates between 2006 and 2014 are shown in Figure 16. In London, the North West as well as Yorkshire and the Humber, 18 year olds have become between 26 to 30 per cent more likely to enter higher education between 2006 and 2014. Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the South West of England have seen the lowest proportional increases over this period (5 to 16 per cent).

Figure 16 Change in entry rates between 2006 and 2014 for UK 18 year olds by region and country

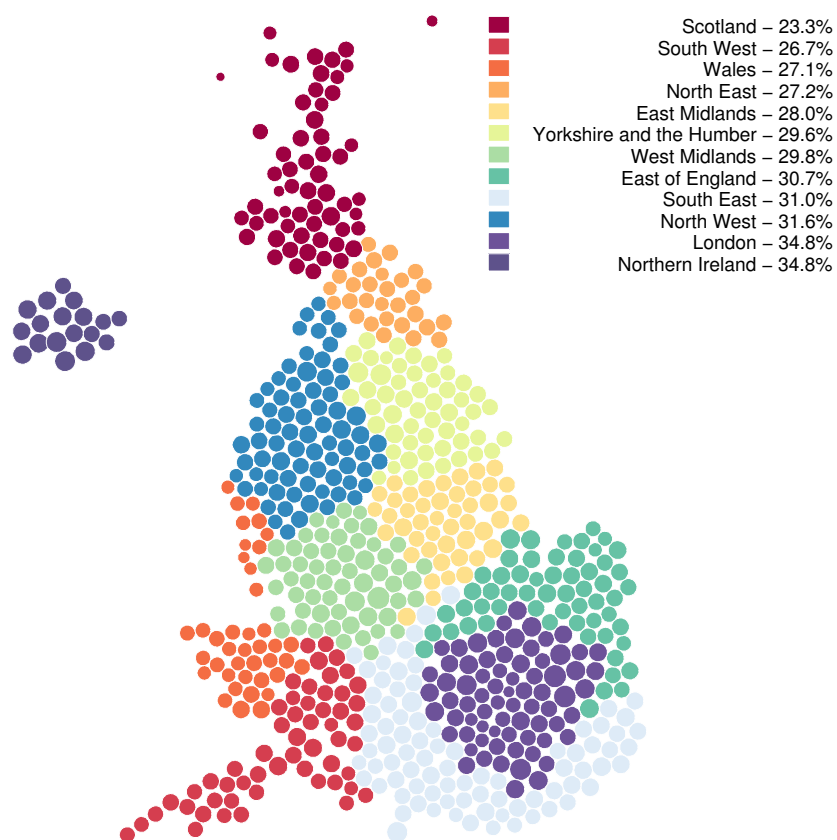


Entry rates by parliamentary constituency

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 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.

Figure 17 shows all the parliamentary constituencies in the UK by the region they are located in and the entry rate of that region. 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.

Figure 17 Parliamentary constituencies by region and region 18 year old entry rate



Entry rates vary across constituencies from 11 per cent to 50 per cent of 18 year olds

The proportion of 18 year olds in a constituency who enter higher education through UCAS varied from 11 per cent to 50 per cent in 2014. Young people living in the constituencies with the highest entry rates were almost five times more likely to enter higher education than those living in constituencies with the lowest rates.

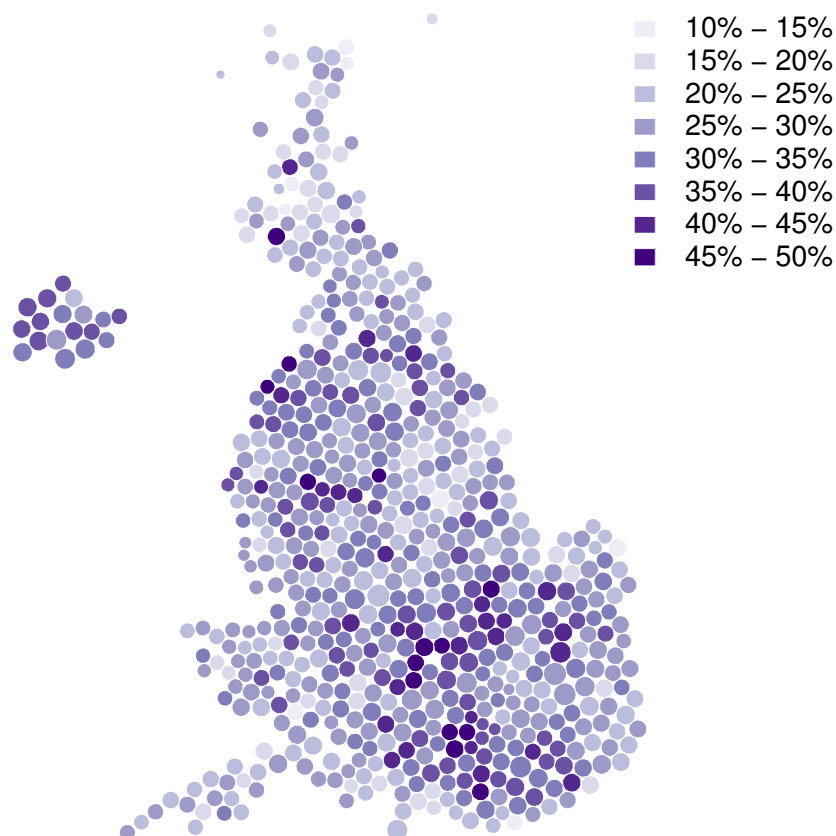
Entry rates also vary between constituencies within a region. In the South East, the region with the most variation in entry rates, the range in entry rates spanned by the constituency with the lowest rate (13 per cent) and the constituency with the highest rate (50 per cent) is 37 percentage points (280 per cent proportionally). In the North East, the region with the least variation, the difference in entry rates between the constituency with the lowest rate (20 per cent) and the constituency with the highest rate (37 per cent) is 17 percentage points (79 per cent proportionally).

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

In Wales the range was from 17 per cent to 37 per cent, while in Northern Ireland the range was from 23 per cent to 40 per cent.

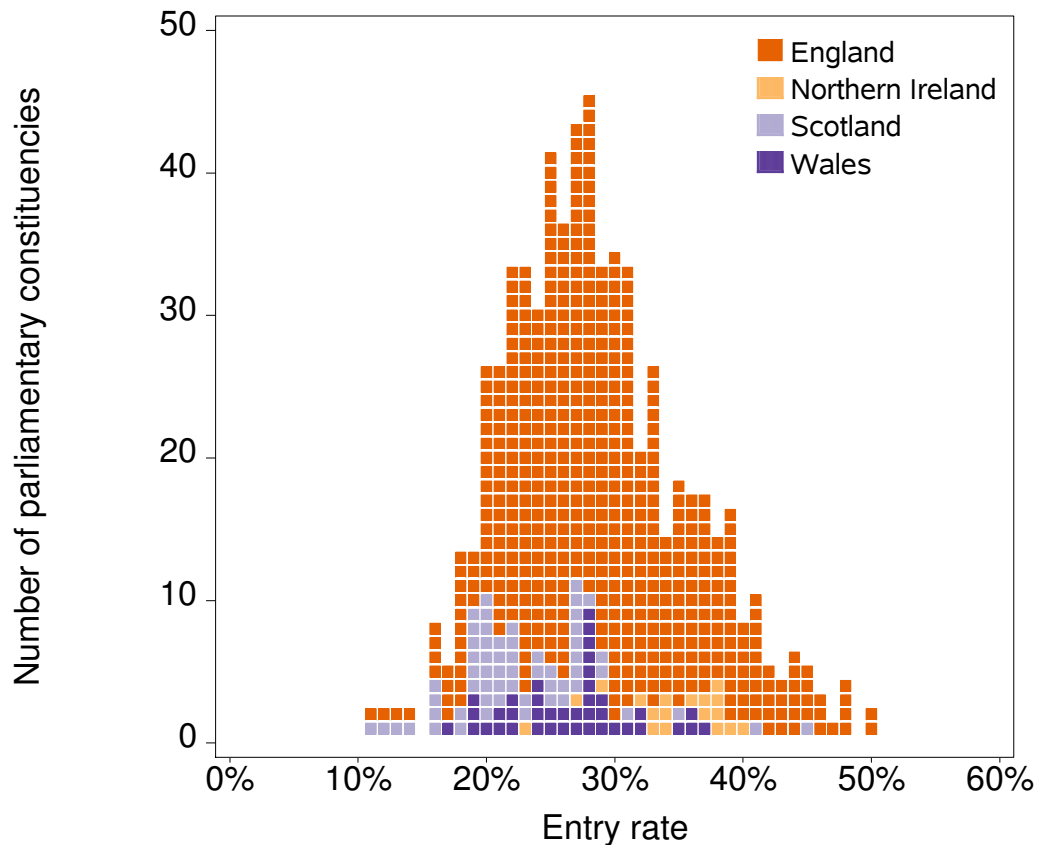
In Scotland the percentage point gap between the constituency with the lowest entry rate (11 per cent) and the highest rate (45 per cent) was 34 percentage points (307 per cent proportionally). Higher Education provided by further education colleges is an important component of provision in Scotland that is not recorded through UCAS. Around one third of young entrants in Scotland will be in further education colleges and not recorded in these statistics. The proportion studying in further education colleges in some constituencies can be higher, around half (see HEFCE 2005/03, page 43). So the UCAS entry rates in these areas will understate HE entry rates in these constituencies, possibly by around one half in extreme cases.

Figure 18 Entry rates in 2014 for UK 18 year olds by parliamentary constituency



Parliamentary constituency entry rates are also plotted in the histogram below. Each parliamentary constituency in the United Kingdom is represented by a square (coloured according to the country in which the constituency is located). Half of parliamentary constituencies have 18 year old entry rates that fall within a ten percentage point band (between 23 and 33 per cent). A relatively small number of constituencies have entry rates less than 20 per cent or higher than 40 per cent. The UCAS 18 year old entry rate will understate HE entry rates in Scotland, especially for lower entry rate areas, since HE provided by Scottish colleges is not included in the UCAS data.

Figure 19 Distribution of 18 year old entry rates in 2014 by parliamentary constituency

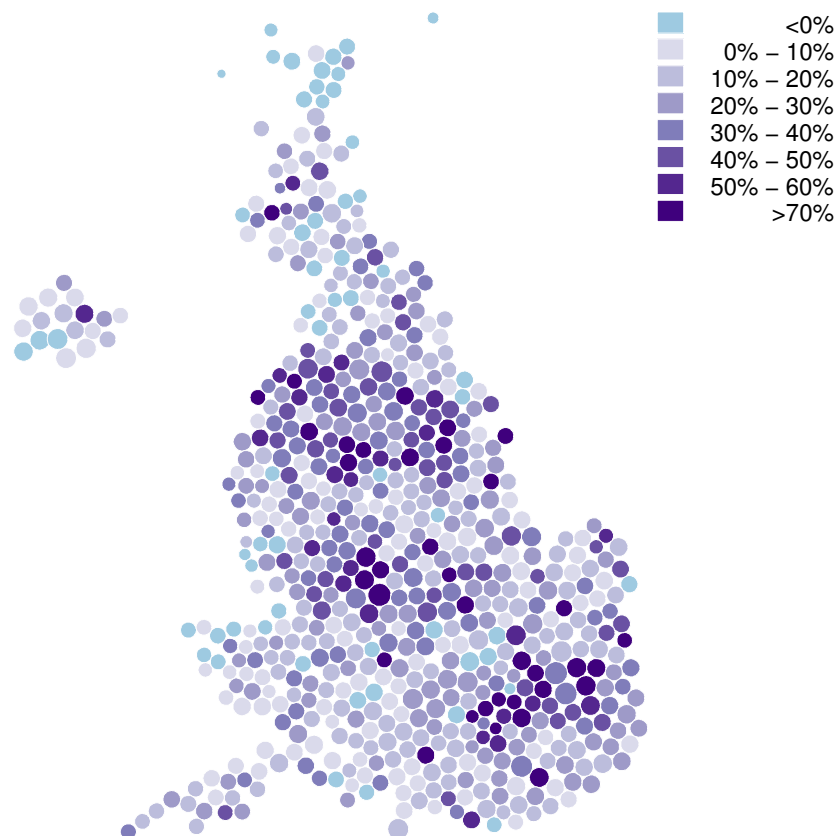


Wide range of changes in entry rates between 2006 and 2014

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 against underlying change. Looking at changes over a longer period, where underlying changes may be greater, can reduce this.

Between 2006 and 2014 entry rates increased in the majority of constituencies. In 59 constituencies (9.1 per cent) the entry rate in 2014 was lower than the entry rate in 2006. In 62 constituencies (9.5 per cent) the entry rate of 18 year olds increased by (proportionally) 50 per cent or more.

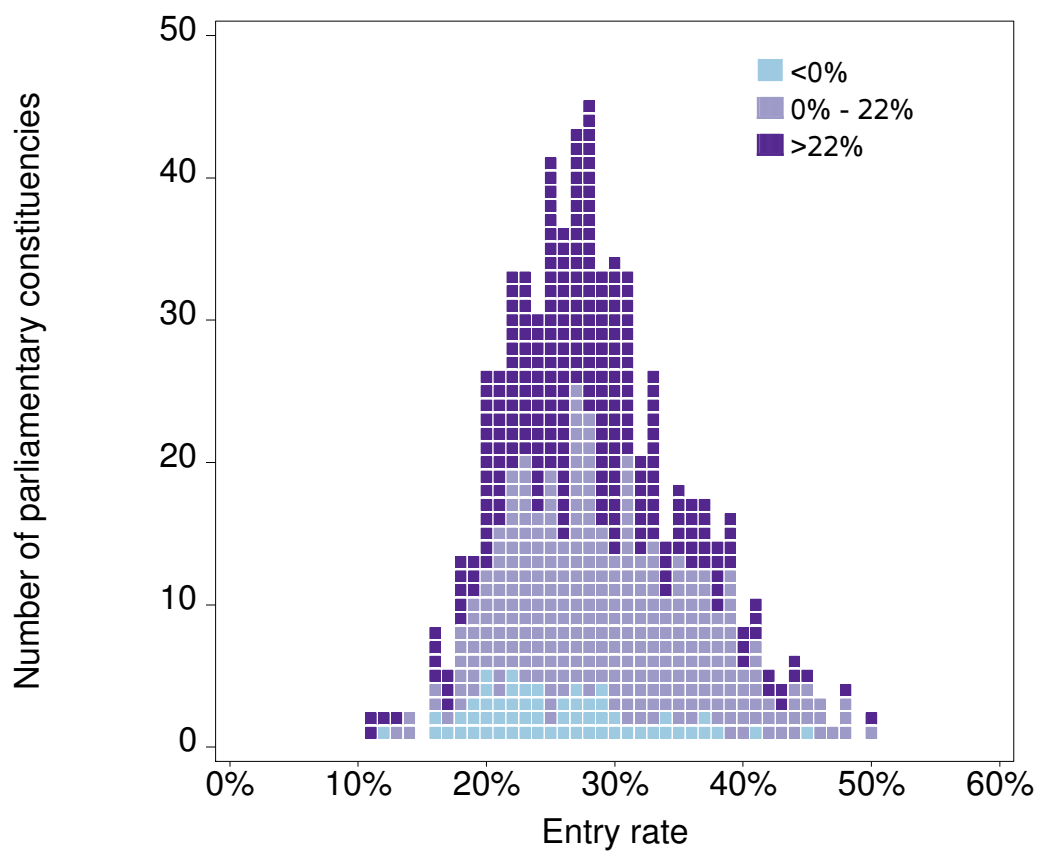
Figure 20 Proportional change in 18 year old entry rate between 2006 and 2014 by constituency



Constituencies where the entry rate had decreased since 2006 generally have lower than average entry rates in 2014. For example around three quarters of these constituencies where entry rates were lower in 2014 than 2006 had entry rates in 2014 of less than 30 per cent.

The proportional change for the 18 year old entry rate for the UK as a whole between 2006 and 2014 was 22 per cent. Of those constituencies that had increases in entry rates since 2006, around half had increases that were above the average UK increase of 22 per cent. These constituencies with the largest increases since 2006 typically have entry rates around average in 2014.

Figure 21 Distribution of change in entry rates between 2006 and 2014 for UK 18 year olds by parliamentary constituency

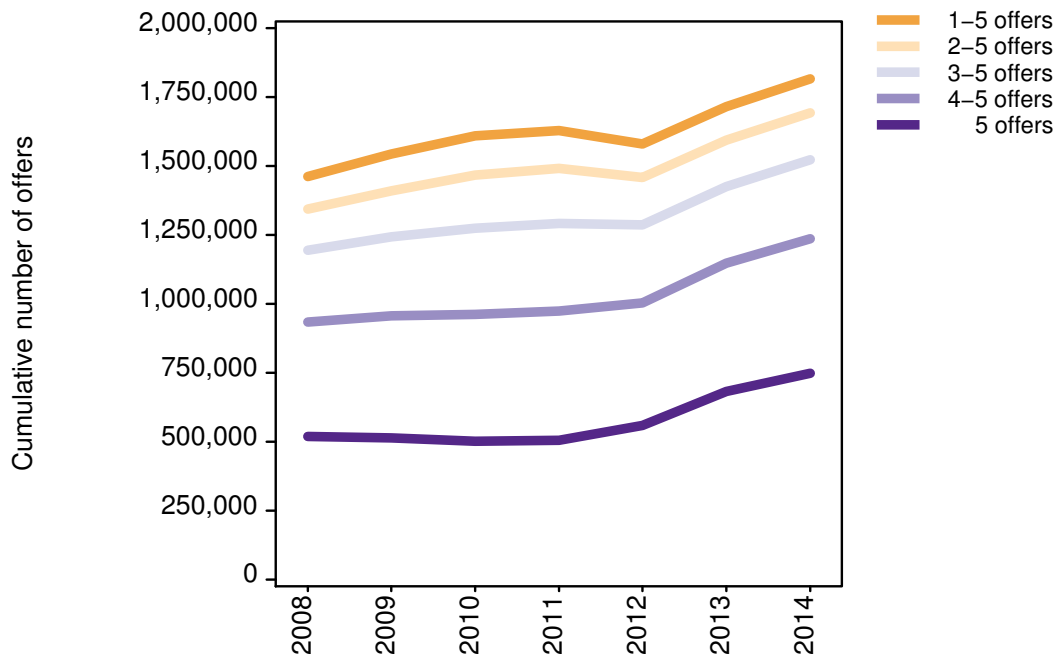


Offer-making to main scheme applicants in 2014

Offers made in 2014 increase by 6 per cent to 1.8 million, highest recorded total

The number of offers made to all main scheme applicants is shown in Figure 22. 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 applicants) increased in 2014 by 101,400 (+6 per cent) to 1.8 million, the highest number of offers made recorded and continuing the trend seen in 2013 of an increasing number of offers. The number of offers made to applicants who receive offers for all five of their choices increased by 64,600 (+9 per cent). The total number of offers made to applicants with four or five offers reached a record high at 1.2 million. This means that for the second consecutive year more than two thirds of offers are made to applicants with 4 or 5 offers to choose between continuing the trend that offer-making is becoming more concentrated on applicants with four or five offers.

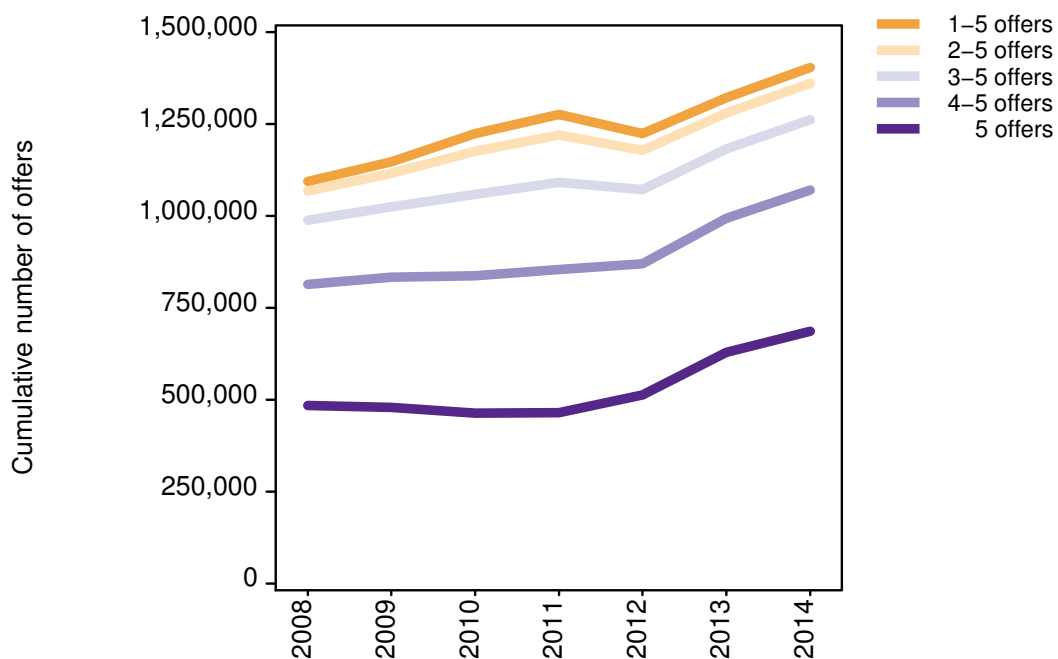
Figure 22 Total number of offers made to all main scheme applicants by number of offers received (cumulative categories)



Offers made to UK and EU applicants who make a full set of choices increase by 6 per cent to 1.4 million, the highest level recorded

UK and EU domiciled 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 6 per cent (82,300) to 1.4 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 UK and EU five-choice applicants was to those who received the maximum five offers, +57,800, +9 per cent to 686,400.

Figure 23 Total number of offers made to UK and EU applicants who made five choices by number of offers received (cumulative categories)



The number of applicants who received offers increased in 2014 to a similar level as the high in 2011

The total number of UK and EU main scheme applicants who made five choices increased by 4 per cent in 2014, though still remains below 2011 cycle levels. The number of these applicants receiving at least one offer increased by 5 per cent (+19,300) to 389,500, close to the high in 2011. The increase in applicants holding offers is slightly less than the increase in offers made to this group (+6 per cent) because of the increasing concentration of offers on those applicants who receive many offers.

The number of applicants receiving offers to all five of their applications increased by 9 per cent (11,600) to 137,300, the highest recorded total and 48 per cent higher than in 2011. The number of applicants receiving no offers to all five of their applications decreased by 4 per cent (-1400) from the 2013 cycle to 33,300 - 26 per cent below the peak in 2011 (of 45,000).

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

In 2014, 92 per cent of UK and EU applicants that made five choices received at least one offer and 55 per cent of these applicants received four or five offers. High offer rates seen at the start of the period (2008 cycle) reduced to reach minimum levels in 2011. However, since 2011 a greater share of applicants have received offers, with further increases in 2014.

The proportion of UK and EU applicants that made five choices, receiving at least one offer increased by 1 percentage point to 92 per cent in 2014 but remains below levels in the 2008 and 2009 cycles. The proportion of applicants receiving four or five offers increased by 2 percentage points to 55 per cent. The proportion of applicants having the maximum five offers to choose between increased to 32 per cent in 2014, the highest level recorded. UK and EU applicants are 26 per cent more likely to have five offers than in 2012, and 52 per cent more likely than in 2011.

Figure 24 UK and EU main scheme applicants who made five choices by number of offers received (cumulative categories)

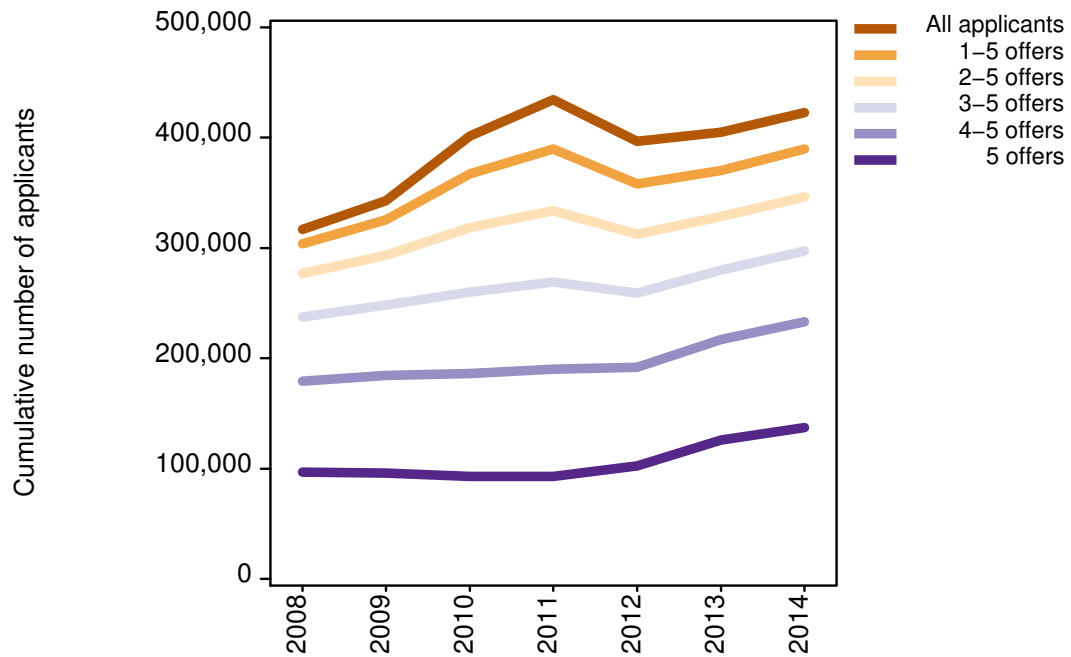
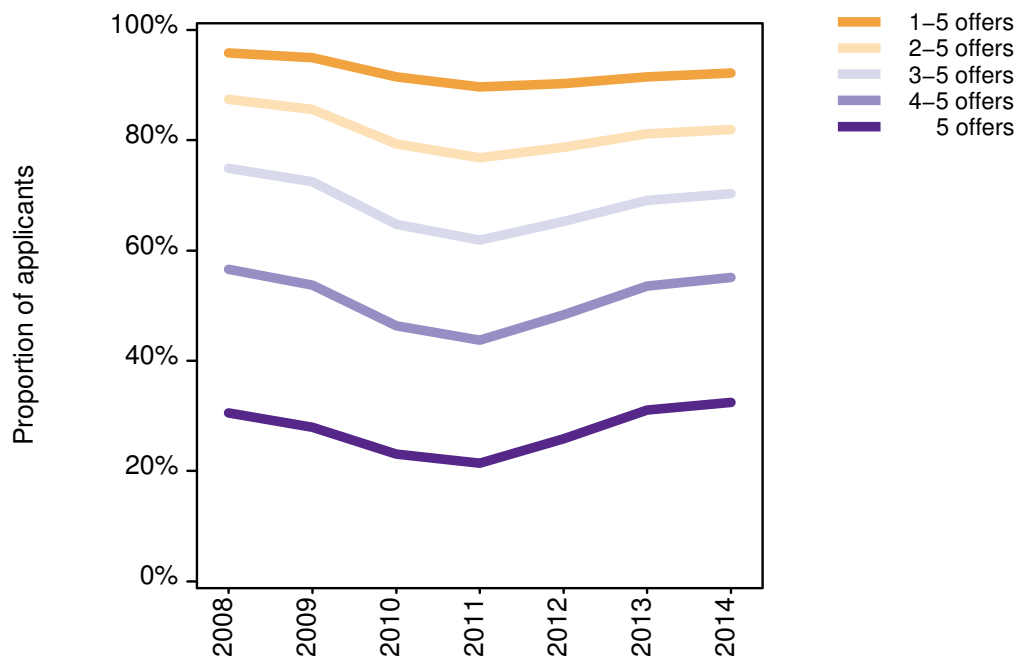


Figure 25 Proportion of UK and EU main scheme applicants who made five choices by number of offers received (cumulative categories)



Offer rates for young applicants increase in 2014 to new highs

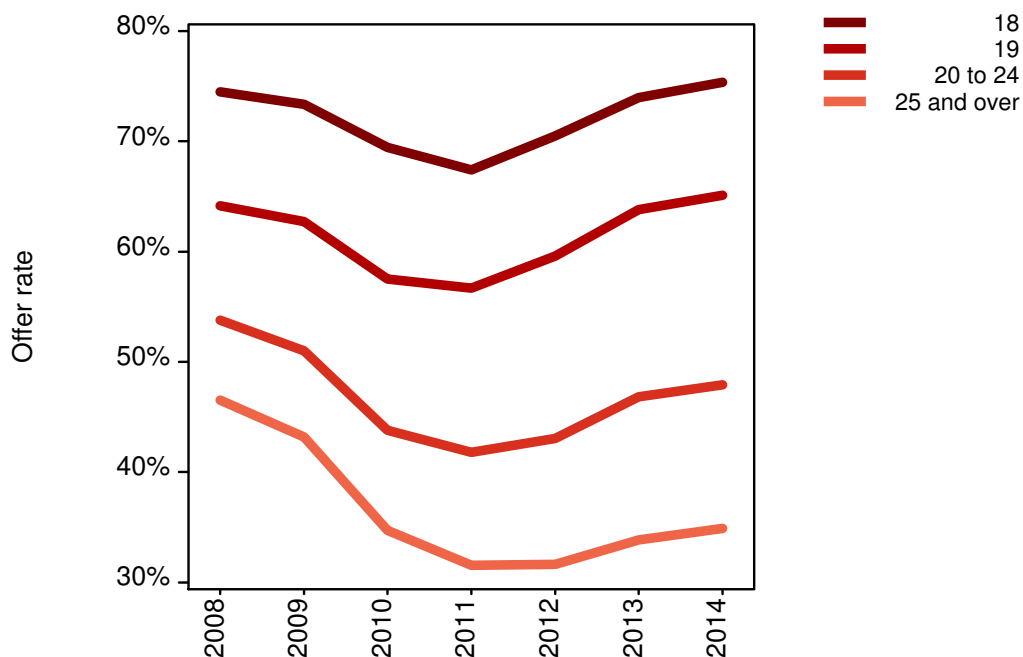
Applications from younger UK and EU applicants are more likely to receive offers than applicants in other age groups. Applications from 18 year old applicants consistently have the highest chance of receiving an offer and this increased in 2014 to reach 75 per cent, the new highest total recorded since 2008 and 8 percentage points higher than in 2011. Applications from 19 year olds are less likely to receive an offer but show a similar pattern with an increase in 2014 to 65 per cent, also a new high since 2008.

Offer rates to older applicants increase in 2014 but remain lower than previously

Applications from applicants in older age groups are less likely to receive offers. In 2014, 48 per cent of applications from 20-24 year old applicants received offers (up 1 percentage point from the 2013 cycle) and 35 per cent for those from applicants aged 25 and over (up 1 percentage point from the 2013 cycle) - less than half the offer rate to applications from 18 year olds.

Offer rates to applications from these older age groups fell sharply between 2008 and 2011. Offer rates have increased since 2011, and increased further in 2014, but not by enough to offset the earlier falls. Offer rates to the older age groups remain substantially below previous levels, in contrast to younger age groups. The offer rate gap between applications from younger and older applicants is 40 percentage points – 0.3 percentage point higher than the previous year and the highest in the period measured.

Figure 26 Offer rate (application level) for UK and EU main scheme applicants by age group, excluding under 18s



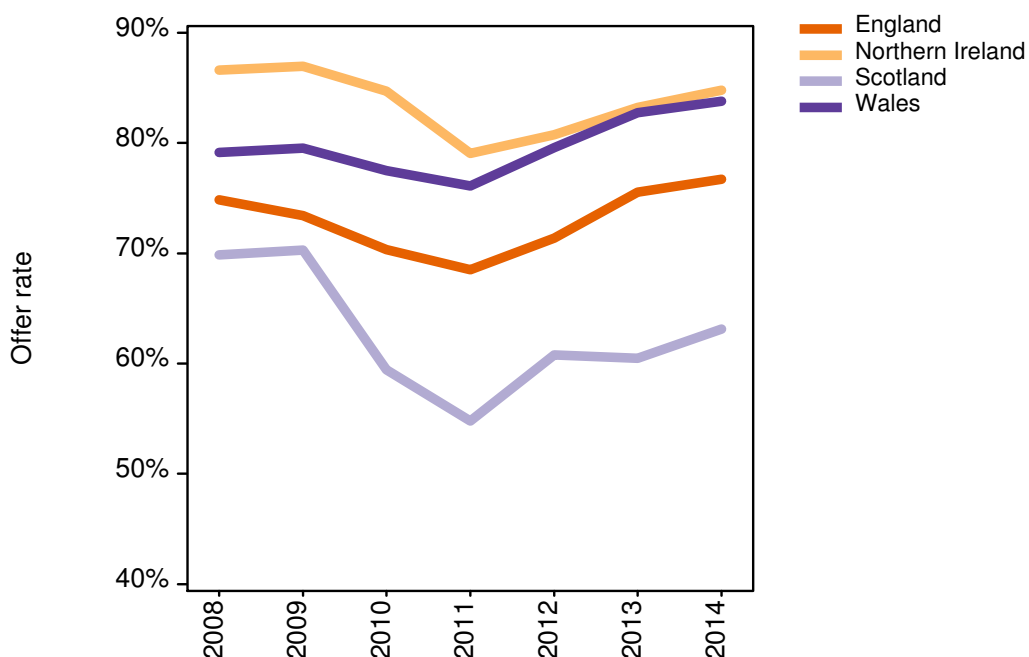
Offer-making by providers

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 and Welsh providers more likely than ever to make offers to UK 18 year olds

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. Since 2011, the offer rates of English, Welsh and Northern Irish providers have been increasing. In 2014, applications from these applicants to providers in Northern Ireland and Wales were most likely to receive an offer (85 and 84 per cents of applications respectively), followed by England (77 per cent) and Scotland (63 per cent). The offer rate from English providers went up 1.2 percentage points from the previous cycle, from Welsh providers 1.1, from Scottish providers 2.7 and from Northern Irish providers 1.6 percentage points. As a result, offer rates to applications from providers in England and Wales at the highest levels recorded since 2008.

Figure 27 Offer rate (application level) to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants by country of provider

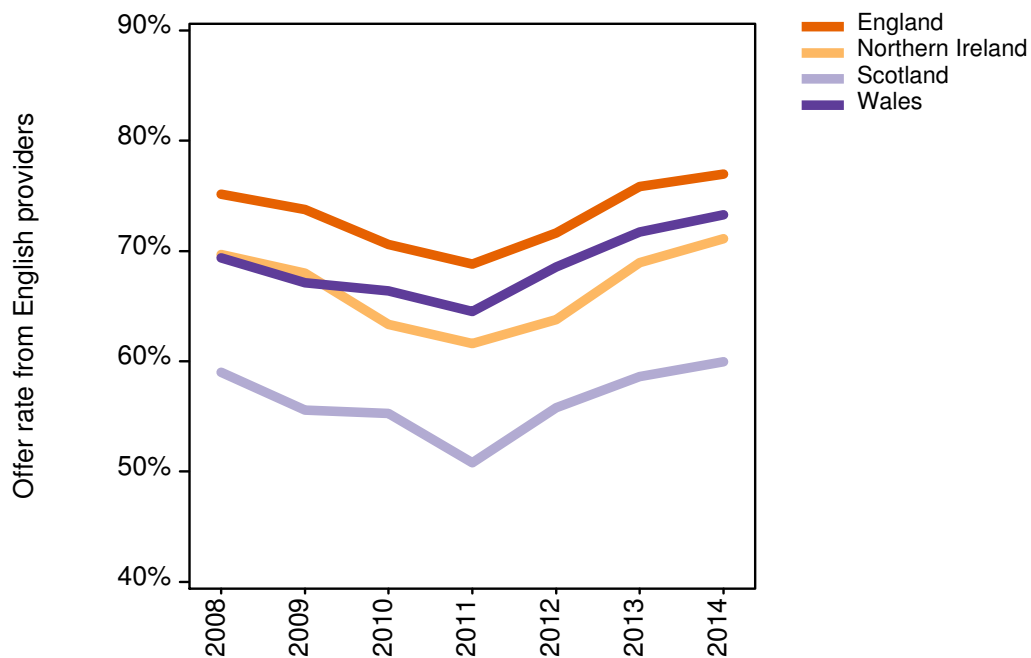


English providers increase offer rates to 18 year olds from across the UK to new highs

The offer rate from English providers in 2014 to applications varies by the country of the 18 year old applicant ranging from 60 per cent for applicants from Scotland in 2014, 71 per cent for applicants from Northern Ireland, 73 per cent for applicants from Wales, to 77 per cent to 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.

Offer rates from English providers to applicants from all UK countries increased by around 1 or 2 percentage points in 2014, a smaller increase than for 2013. These followed similar rises in the 2012 cycle so that applications from all countries are now over 11 to 18 per cent (proportionally) more likely to receive an offer than in 2011. For 18 year old applicants domiciled in all UK domiciles, the chances of receiving an offer from an application to an English provider are now higher than previously recorded in this period.

Figure 28 Offer rate (application level) from English providers to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants by country of domicile

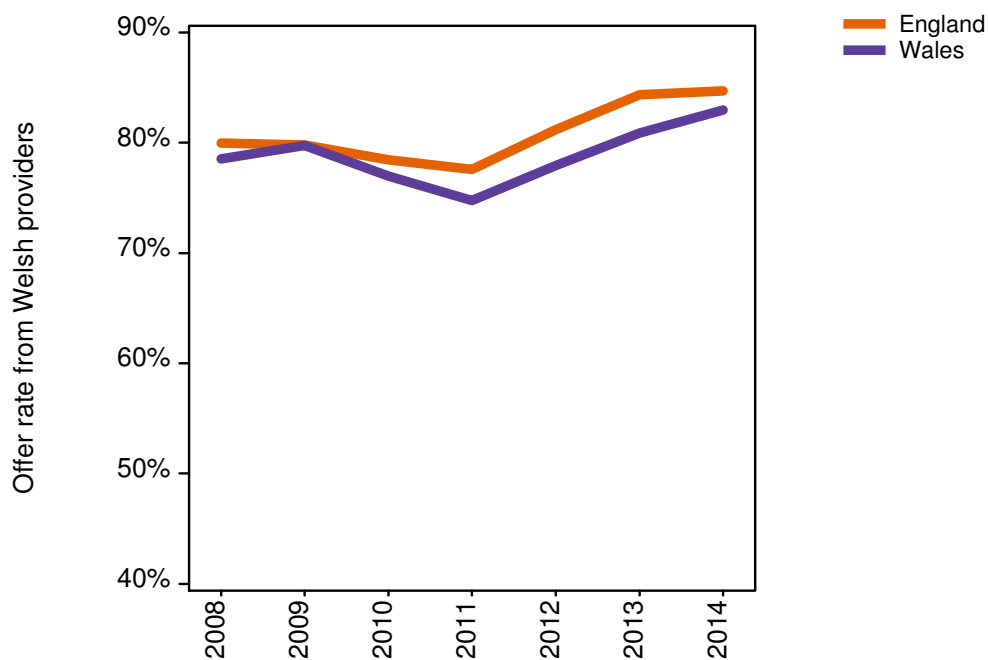


Providers in Wales increase offer-making to both Welsh and English applications

The large majority of UK applications to Welsh providers come from Wales and England. The offer rate by Welsh providers in 2014 to applications from 18 year olds is similar for applications from Wales (83 per cent) and from England (85 per cent). The trends in offer rates have also been similar to applicants from both countries over the period, with offer rates to English applicants being slightly higher throughout.

Offer rates from Welsh providers increased by 0.3 percentage points for 18 year old applicants from England in 2014 and 2.1 percentage points for 18 year old applicants from Wales, with the offer rates to applications from both countries at their highest values for the period. For 18 year old applicants from Wales, this follows similar increases in 2012 and 2013, meaning applications from Welsh applicants are 11 per cent more likely to receive an offer than in 2011. The proportional increase in the acceptance rate for 18 year old English applicants to Welsh providers was less than the previous two years and these applicants are now 9 per cent more likely to receive an offer than in 2011.

Figure 29 Offer rate (application level) from Welsh providers to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants from England and Wales

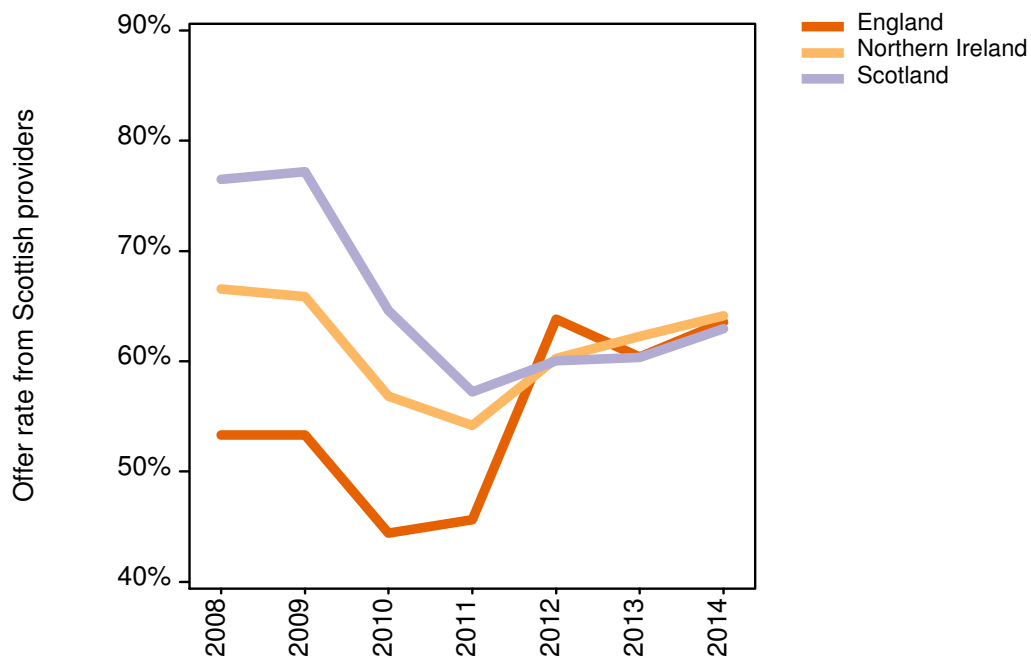


Offer rates by Scottish providers increase for all UK 18 year old applicants

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 per cent for Scottish applicants and 46 per cent for English applicants.

In 2014 the offer rate to applications from Scottish applicants increased by 2.6 percentage points to 62.9 per cent (+4.3 per cent proportionally). The offer rate to applications from English applicants increased by 3.2 percentage points to 63.6 per cent (+5.3 per cent proportionally), close to the recorded high of 63.8 per cent in 2012. Since 2012, offer rates by Scottish providers to English applicants have been slightly ahead of offers rates to Scottish applicants, whereas five years ago applications from Scottish applicants were proportionately around 45 per cent more likely to receive an offer than applications from English applicants.

Figure 30 Offer rate (application level) from Scottish providers to 18 year old UK main scheme applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Scotland



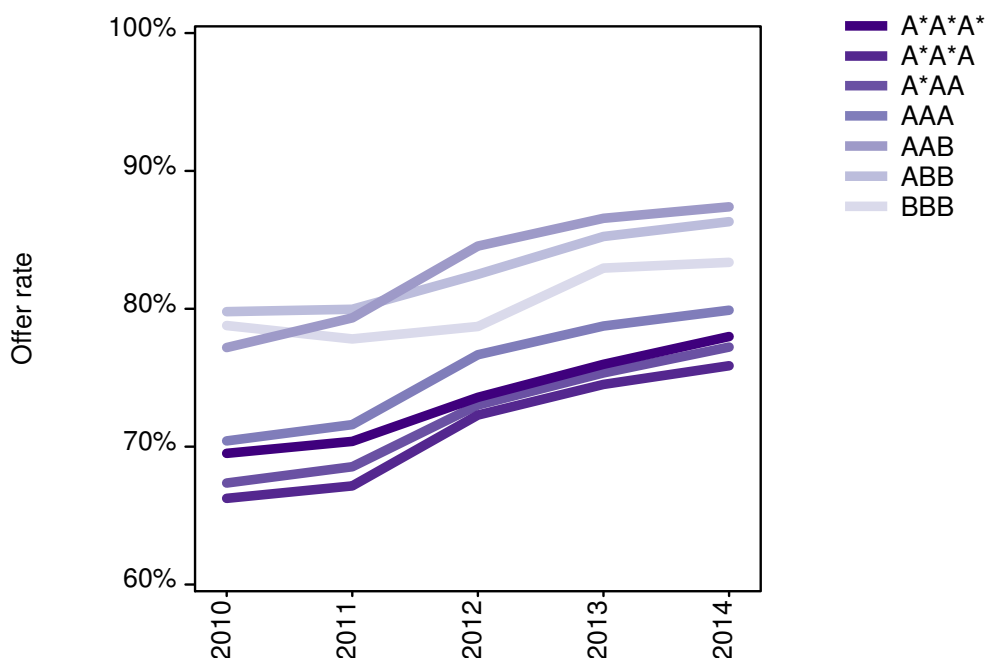
Offer rates increase to applicants who are predicted A levels from BBB to A*A*A*

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 31 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 competitiveness of the most selective courses.

There is a relatively narrow range of offer rates across these grade profiles ranging (in 2014) from 75.9 per cent for A*A*A* to 87.4 per cent for AAB. The offer rates to applications from all selected grade profiles have continued to increase since 2012. In the 2014 cycle, applications from those predicted A*A*A* increased the most with 2.0 percentage points whilst the offer rate for those predicted BBB increased the least with 0.4 percentage points.

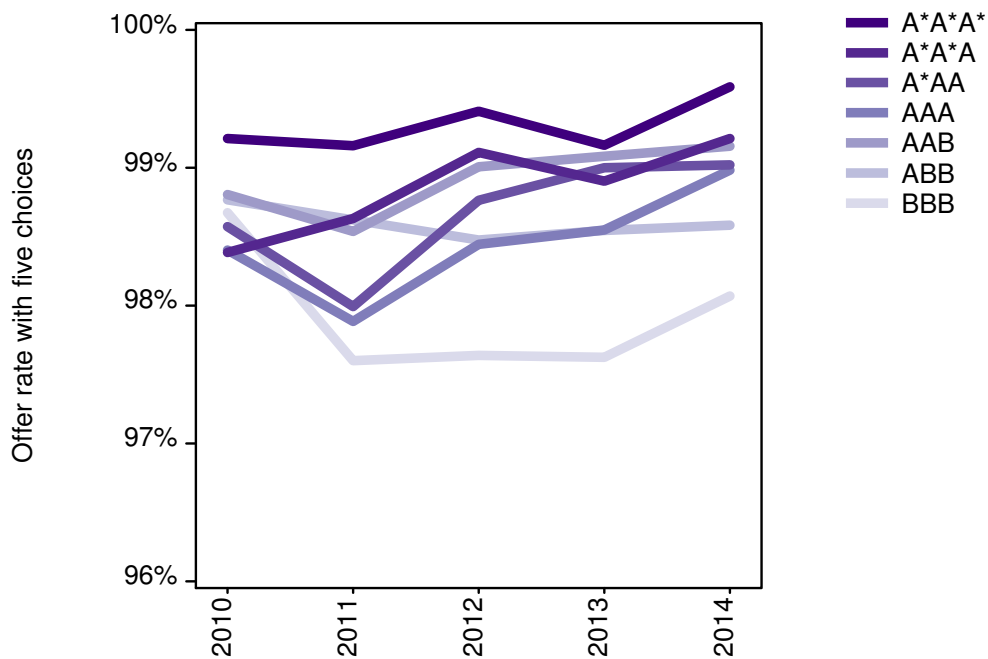
Figure 31 Offer rate (application level) to 18 year old English domiciled main scheme applicants by selected predicted grade profile of applicant



Young applicants over a wide range of predicted grades who made five choices were at least 98 per cent likely to get 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 receive offers is very high across common grade profiles ranging from 98.1 per cent of those predicted BBB to 99.6 per cent of those predicted A*A*A*. There was a slight increase in the proportion of applicants receiving at least one offer for all grade profiles (selected for illustration) in the 2014 cycle.

Figure 32 Proportion of 18 year old English domiciled main scheme applicants that receive at least one offer (from five choices) by predicted grade profile of applicant



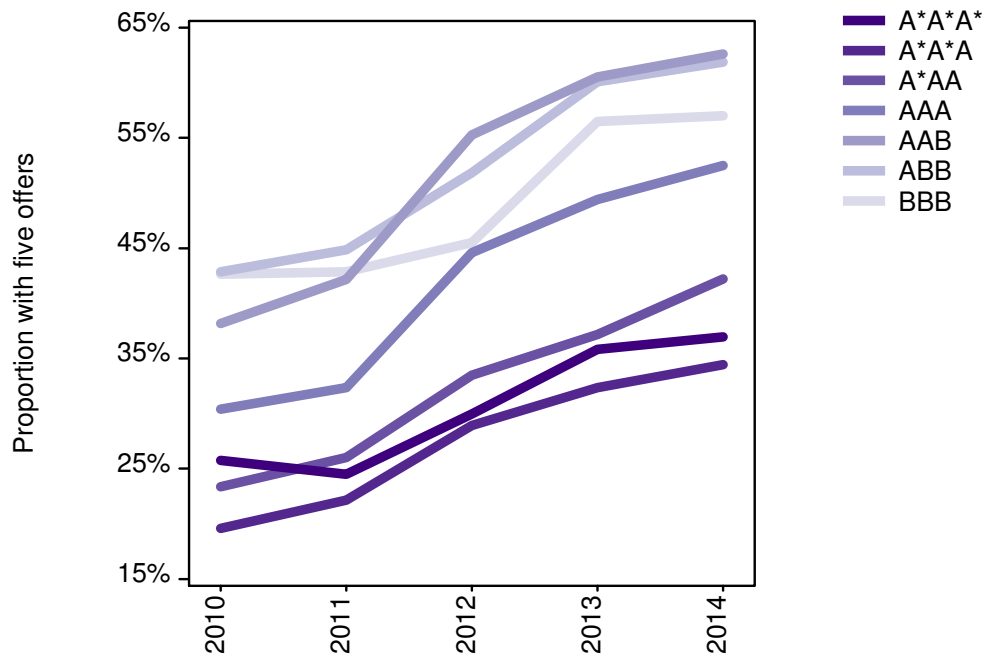
The proportion of applicants getting five offers increases in 2014 by 0.5-5.0 per cent across a wide range of predicted grade profiles

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. 2014 was the third consecutive year for this offer rate to increase across all the top predicted grade profiles to record highs for each. In 2014, the proportion getting five offers ranged from 34.5 per cent of those predicted A*A*A to 62.6 per cent of those predicted AAB.

For those predicted A*AA, the probability of getting five offers increased the most (proportionally) in 2014 by around 13.5 per cent. Those predicted A*A*A had the next highest proportional increase in this offer rate by 6.6 per cent. Those predicted BBB had the smallest proportional increase in 2014 by around 0.9 per cent (proportionally).

Between the 2011 and 2014 cycles, the proportion of these applicants getting five offers has increased by around a third or more for all the selected predicted grade profiles.

Figure 33 Proportion of 18 year old English domiciled main scheme applicants that receive offers to each of five choices by predicted grade profile of applicant



Unconditional offer-making to 18 year olds

Unconditional offers to 18 year olds increased in 2014 but remain less than 2 per cent of offers

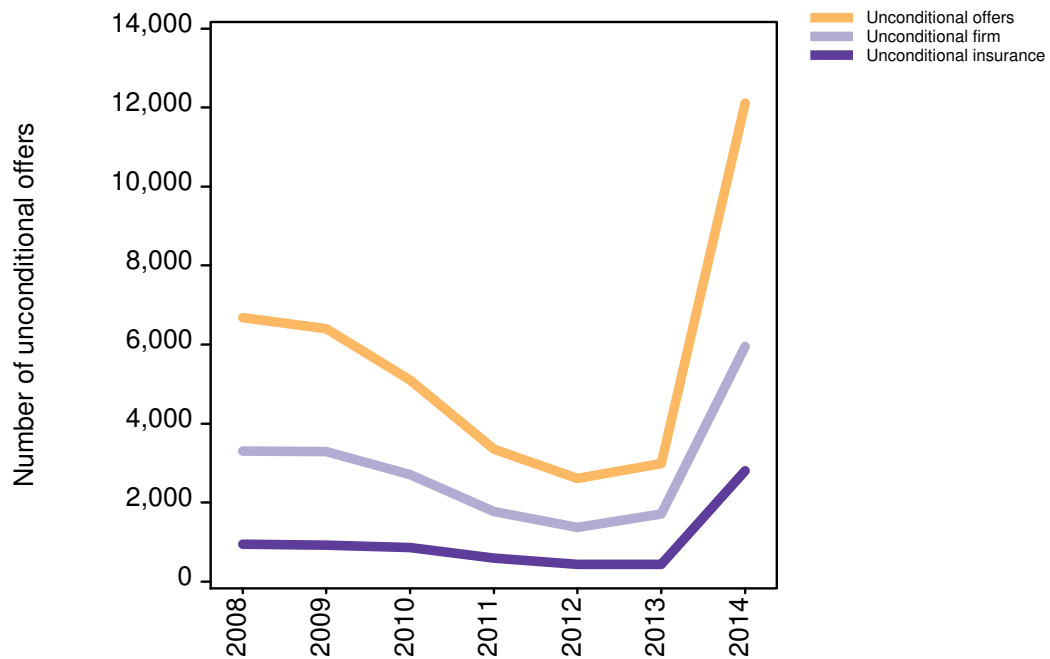
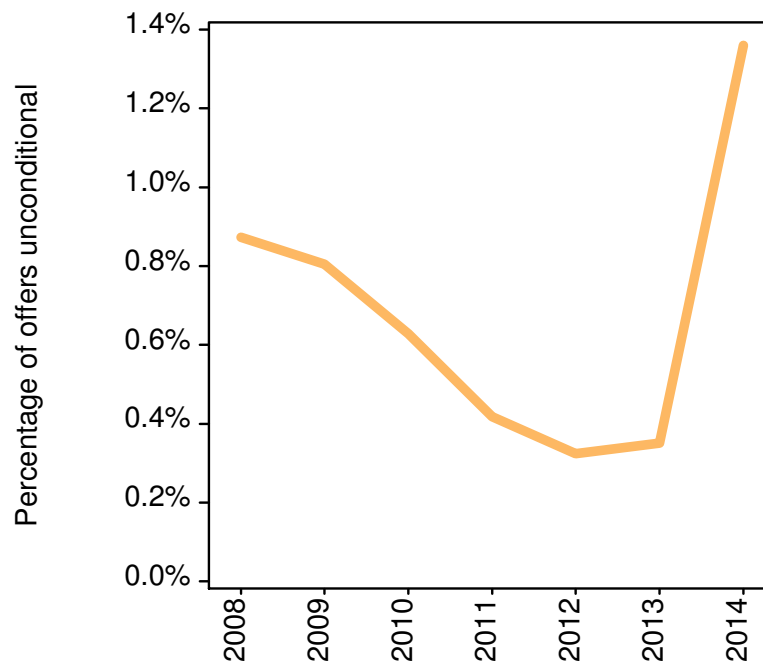
Main scheme 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales usually apply with most of their qualifications for entry to higher education still pending and with predicted, rather than achieved, results. They form a uniform group within which offer-making by providers, and the response of applicants, can be assessed from year to year.

Offers made by providers to applicants are described as being either conditional or unconditional, depending on whether the applicant needs to meet conditions, usually related to attaining specific qualification profiles. Unconditional offers are typically made when the provider is satisfied that the applicant has met any conditions for entry they may have. Most unconditional offers are made to older applicants who already have qualifications for entry.

Relatively few unconditional offers are recorded as being made to 18 year old main scheme applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales, typically less than 1 per cent of all offers made to this group. The number of these offers recorded decreased in each cycle between 2008 (6,700 offers) and 2012 (2,600 offers). In 2013, the number increased by 380 (+15 per cent proportionally) and then in 2014 increased by a factor of four to over 12,000, the highest number on record.

Unconditional offers are a very small proportion of the total offers recorded for this group, typically between 0.3 and 0.9 per cent. In 2014 the proportion increased to 1.4 per cent, the highest on record, but a relatively small proportion of the total offers made which were almost entirely conditional.

When an offer is made by a provider the applicant may choose to select that offer as their firm choice or as their insurance choice. The numbers of unconditional firm choices and unconditional insurance choices resulting from the unconditional offers recorded follow a similar trend to the number of unconditional offers made.

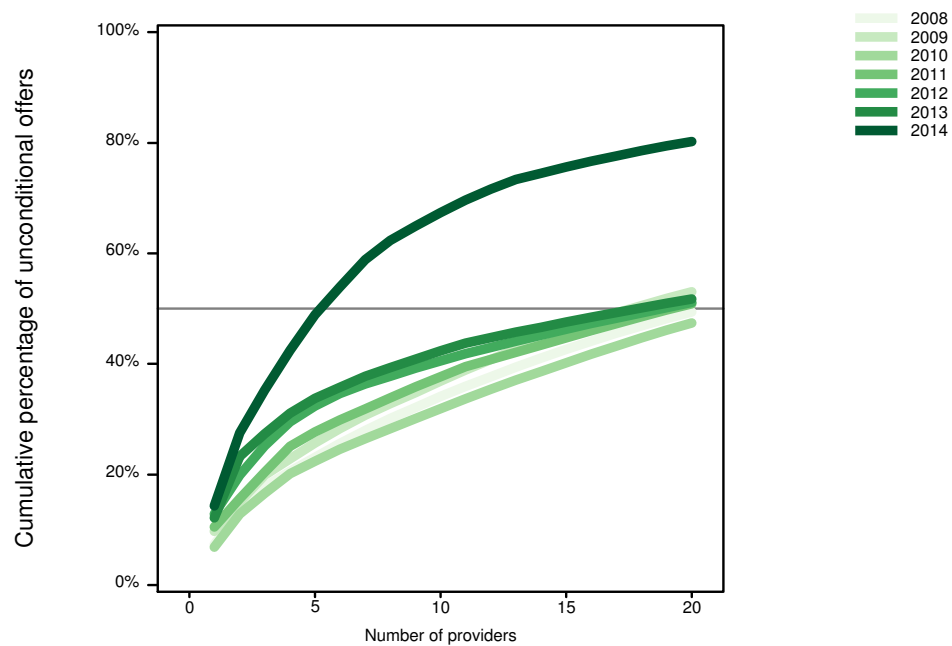
Figure 34 Number of unconditional offers made, number made firm and number made insurance**Figure 35 Proportion of offers made that were unconditional**

Unconditional offer-making increasingly concentrated within a small group of providers

Since 2008 the share of recorded unconditional offers has become increasingly concentrated amongst fewer providers.

Between 2008 and 2013 half of all unconditional offers in each cycle were made by 20 providers, and between 30 per cent and 40 per cent were made by 10 providers. In 2014, this changed so that 80 per cent of all unconditional offers were made by 20 providers, and 70 per cent were made by 10 providers. Half of all unconditional offers were made by just five providers. Therefore the increase in recorded unconditional offer making in 2014 was concentrated in a small number of providers, between 5 and 10.

Figure 36 Cumulative proportion of all unconditional offers made by number of providers



Unconditional offers are not materially preferred by applicants choosing between offers

Within a provider, unconditional offers may be directed towards only certain kinds of applicants, which could mean that the likelihood of an unconditional offer being made firm is different to that of a conditional offer. In 2014, 49 per cent of unconditional offers were selected as firm choice and 23 per cent were selected as insurance choice. But the likely direction of these offers to particular types of applicant means that comparing these response rates to those for conditional offers will not reliably indicate whether they influence the reply that the applicant makes.

One other way of assessing applicant response to the growth in unconditional offers is to compare, through time, how applicants respond to all offers from groups of providers. The concentration of new use of unconditional offer making in 2014 in a relatively small group of providers means that the response of applicants to all their offers (unconditional and conditional) can be compared both through time, and against a group of providers that have never made a substantial number of unconditional offers.

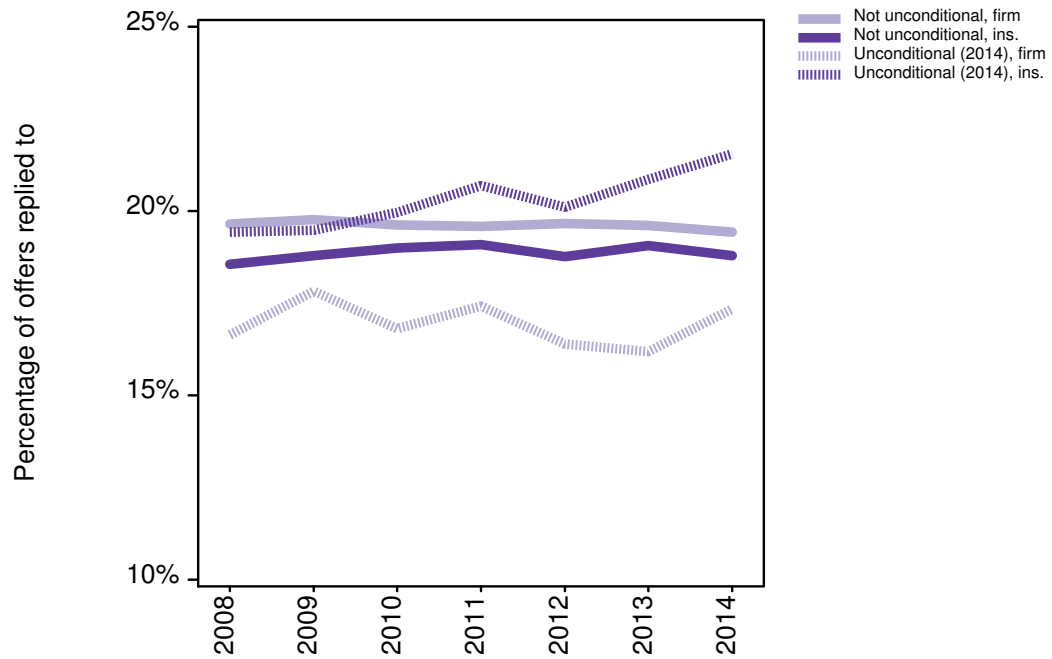
In 2014, 19.5 per cent of all offers made by providers who have never made a substantial number of unconditional offers (fewer than 100, labelled 'not unconditional') are selected as the firm choice and 18.8 per cent selected as the insurance choice. These rates are close to rates seen for this group of providers in recent cycles.

A small group of providers had a substantial number of unconditional offers recorded for the first time in 2014. The offers (both conditional and unconditional) made by these providers in 2014 were more likely to be selected as the applicant's insurance choice than their firm choice. This pattern has been seen for this group of providers across the period from 2008.

In 2014, 17.3 per cent of all offers from these providers were selected as the applicant's firm choice. This is an increase in this rate compared with 2013, but not unusually high compared with recent cycles and remains below the equivalent rate for providers who have never made a substantial number of unconditional offers.

The proportion of offers that were selected as insurance from this group of providers increased in 2014 to 21.5 per cent, the highest recorded proportion, although not unexpected compared to the long term trend.

Figure 37 Proportion of unconditional offers made firm or insurance, split by whether the provider group had made unconditional offers for the first time in 2014



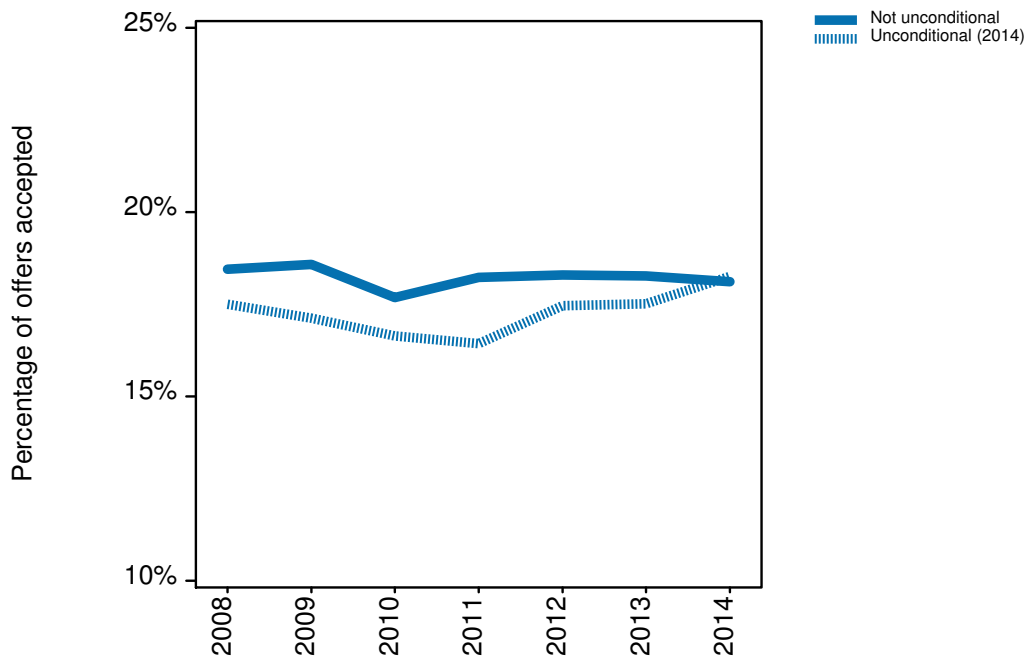
Unconditional offers do not materially affect proportion of offers leading to acceptances

Another way of looking at the outcome of offers is whether they lead to an acceptance by the end of the cycle.

The proportion of offers that result in an applicant being placed at providers who have never made a material number of unconditional offers has remained broadly constant since 2008, ranging between 18 and 19 per cent.

For providers that made unconditional offers for the first time in 2014 the proportion of offers that lead to an acceptant has historically been lower, ranging between 16 and 18 per cent. In 2014 this proportion increased for providers making unconditional offers for the first time. The size and direction of this increase (1 percentage point, 4 per cent proportionally) is not inconsistent with the trend leading up to 2014, when unconditional offers were not being materially used by this group of providers.

Figure 38 Proportion of unconditional offers accepted by whether the provider group had made unconditional offers for the first time in 2014



Acceptance routes

Record numbers accepted through firm choice, with substantial increases in acceptances through insurance choice and Clearing (from main scheme)

There are a number of different acceptance routes in the admissions cycle. Figure 39 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 the 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 2014, firm choice continued to be the most likely route of acceptance and the numbers accepted by this route increased by 8,900 (+2.5 per cent) to 372,200, the highest number of acceptances recorded through this route to date.

Acceptances through an insurance choice (for applicants who do not satisfy their firm offer) increased at a faster rate than acceptances through firm rate between 2006 and 2011 and then fell substantially in 2012. In 2013 and 2014, the number of acceptances through this route increased each year, and again by more proportionally than the acceptances to the firm route. In 2014, there were 36,700 acceptances through an insurance choice (+3,900, +11.8 per cent).

Applicants who do not receive any offers from their five main scheme choices, or decline any offers that they receive, are eligible to make choices through the Extra process. Acceptances through Extra choices increased in each cycle between 2006 and 2011, and then fell substantially in 2012. In both the 2013 and 2014 cycle there have been small further decreases in the number of these acceptances. In 2014, 7,600 acceptances were through the Extra route, a decrease of 200 (-2.5 per cent).

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 that were unsuccessful in the main scheme increased in 2014 to 47,500 (+5,200, +12.3 per cent), reaching a record level. The number of applicants accepted by applying directly to the Clearing process fell for the first year since 2010. In 2013, this number was at the highest recorded for this route but in 2014, acceptances direct to Clearing decreased by 1,000 (-6.8 per cent) to 13,800. The total placed through both Clearing routes was 61,300, an increase of 4,200 (7.4 per cent) from 2013 and the highest number ever placed through the Clearing routes.

The Adjustment route (where applicants can 'adjust' to a place at another provider if they meet and exceed the conditions of their offer) was used by 1,200 acceptances in 2014, 60 fewer than the number in the previous cycle and still a very small share of acceptances.

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 40 shows the trends in the number of UK 18 year olds entering by acceptance route. Acceptances through the firm choice route dominate (170,900, 76 per cent of all acceptances) and increased slightly in 2014 (+600, +0.4 per cent). The number accepted through Clearing after applying in the main scheme increased by 3,000 (+14.6 per cent) to 23,600, reversing falls in recent years to the highest recorded. Applying and being accepted direct to Clearing is a less frequently used route for this group of applicants, and has decreased for the first time since 2010 to 1,300. There were increased acceptances through the insurance choice (+2,800, +13.4 per cent) although not enough to offset the substantial fall in 2012. Adjustment use fell by 80 in 2014 to 760 UK 18 year olds placed through this route.

Figure 39 Acceptances by acceptance route (logarithmic scale)

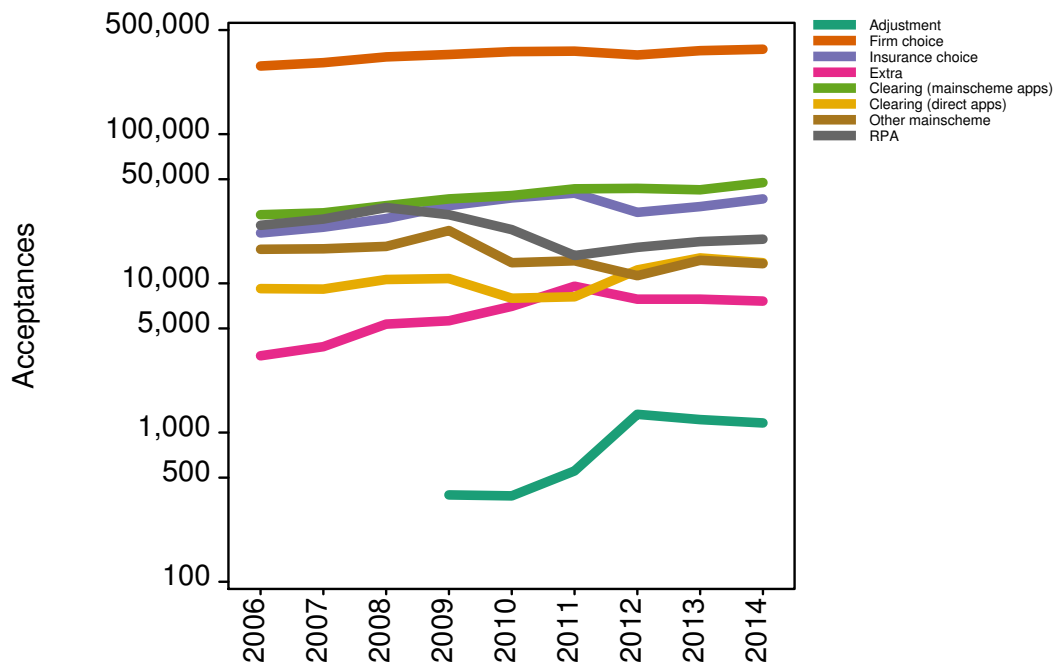
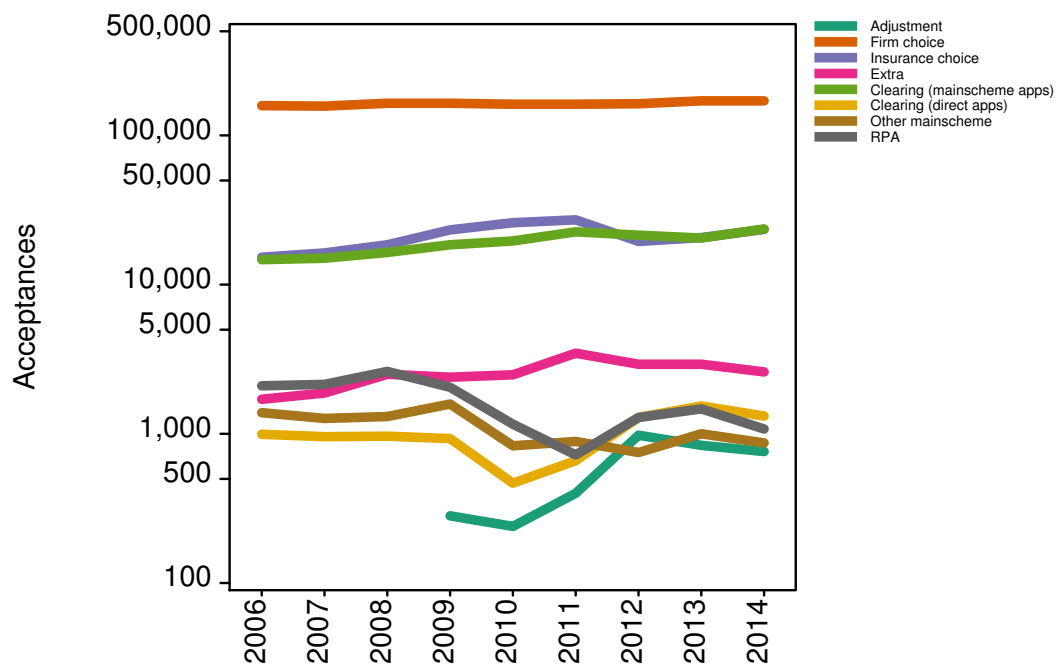


Figure 40 UK domiciled 18 year old acceptances by acceptance route (logarithmic scale)



Average A level attainment varies by acceptance route

Around 50 per cent of all accepted applicants through UCAS are holding three or more A levels, making these the most frequently held qualifications. This makes A level attainment particularly suited to assessing the relative strength of applicants on a common basis by different acceptance routes. However, qualifications held vary by country of domicile, age group of applicants and type of provider meaning that the A level patterns will better reflect trends amongst younger applicants outside of Scotland.

Figure 41 shows, for accepted applicants holding three or more A levels, the number of A level grades from their highest graded three A levels. These numeric A level grades are calculated by assigning a value of 6 grades to an A*, 5 grades to an A, 4 grades to a B and so on, so that the difference in value between adjacent A level grades is 1.

There is a clear rank order in the average A level attainment level for the different routes of entry. The average attainment level for acceptances ranges from around 9 to 10 A level grades (for example, CCC to BCC) for accepted applicants through either of the Clearing routes; between 10 and 11 grades (BCC to BBC) for the insurance route with Extra being consistently slightly higher at just below 11 (BBC); firm choice route accepts are higher again at around 12 grades (BBB); and for those accepted through Adjustment, on average 13 to 14 grades (ABB to AAB), the highest average attainment of all routes.

In 2014, the average attainment of A level acceptances increased for the Extra route (0.2 grades) and the direct to Clearing route (0.2 grades). For all other routes the average A level attainment remained similar to 2013.

Figure 42 shows the difference in average number of A level grades between each route and the firm choice route (which is substantially the largest route by number of acceptances). In 2014, the average A level attainment of applicants accepted through Adjustment was 1.6 grades above firm choice around the same level as 2013.

Applicants that apply and are accepted through either of the Clearing routes have remained throughout the period more than 2 A level grades lower in their average A level attainment than firm choice acceptances.

The relative attainment of applicants accepted through Extra fell between 2010 and 2012 from around 1 grade below firm choice to 1.5 grades below firm choice. In 2014, the average A level grades of these accepted applicants increased slightly back to just over 1 grade below firm choice.

Insurance choice accepted applicants are 1.6 A level grades lower than firm choice accepted applicants.

Figure 41 Average A level grades (best three A levels, applicants with three or more A levels) by acceptance route

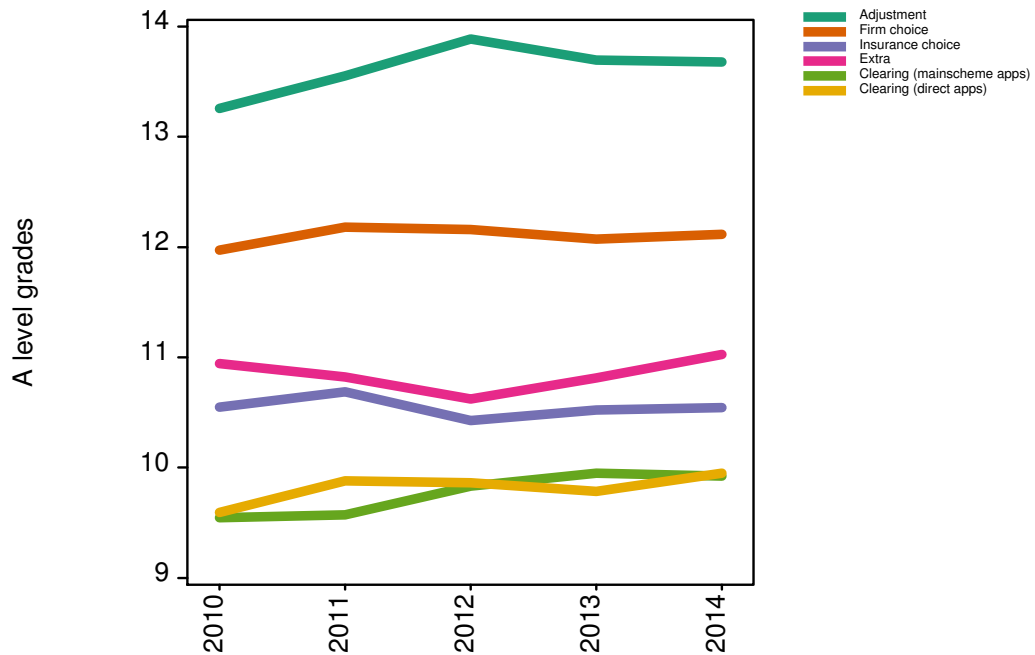
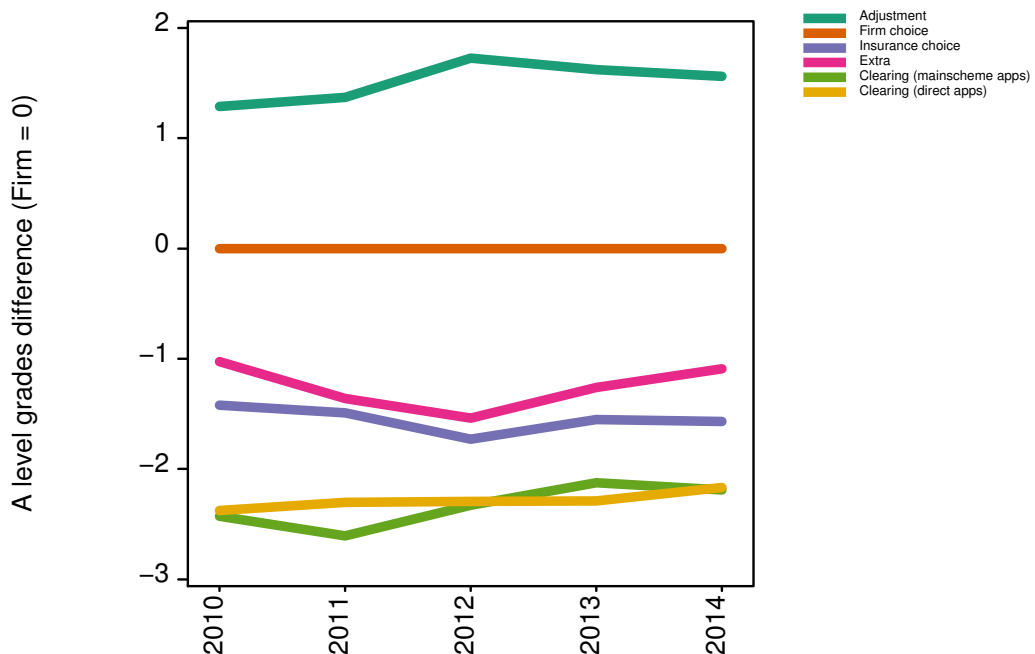


Figure 42 Difference in average A level grades (best three A levels, applicants with three or more A levels) to firm choice by acceptance route



The use of the insurance choice

A greater number of offers made results in more applicants with an insurance choice

The number of acceptances through the insurance route increased in 2014 by 3,900 (nearly 12 per cent proportionally) to 36,700. This was one of the largest proportional increases by route in 2014 and represents almost a quarter of the total increase in acceptances in 2014.

Main scheme applicants that make four or five choices when they apply account for around 80 per cent of all applicants, are most likely to use the insurance choice and form a more uniform group to assess this acceptance route. This section looks at the interaction between offers, replies and confirmation of places for this group of applicants.

Applicants with five offers most likely to set an insurance choice - 94 per cent did so in 2014

An insurance choice can only be set once a firm choice has been made, and only if that firm choice is a conditional offer. Therefore it is only possible for applicants to set an insurance choice if they have a conditional offer that they set to be their firm choice and a further offer to set as insurance.

In 2014 94 per cent of applicants who received five offers set one of those as their insurance offer. This rate reduces as applicants have fewer offers to choose between, falling to 66 per cent for applicants who had only two offers.

The proportion of applicants who set an insurance offer within each number of offers received reached was at maximum for the period in 2011 and has generally been falling since. The proportion setting an insurance offer fell slightly for all offer numbers in 2014.

Increases in applicants holding insurance driven by rise in those getting four and five offers

More applicants have four or five conditional offers than either two or three, and since 2012 there are more applicants with five conditional offers than four. In 2014 the number of applicants receiving four or five offers increased by around 6 per cent. These applicants are the most likely group to set an insurance choice and there were around 10,000 extra insurance choices set by this group in 2014, accounting for almost all the increase in insurance offers held.

Figure 43 Number of applicants and number of insurance choices for applicants who made four or five choices by number of conditional offers received

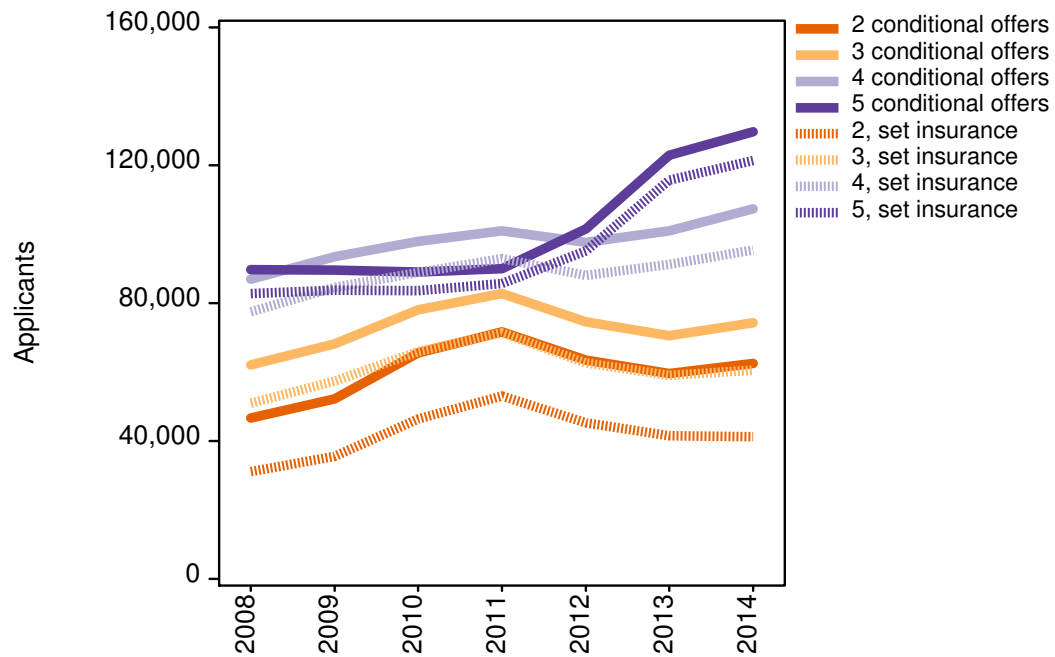
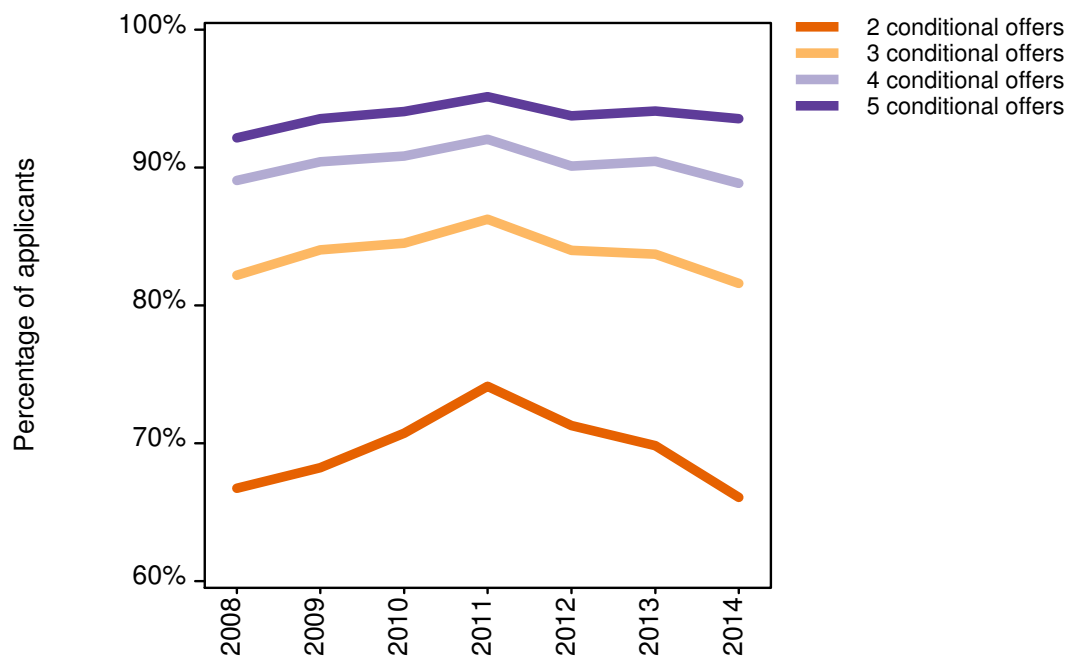


Figure 44 Proportion of applicants who made four or five choices with an insurance choice by number of conditional offers received

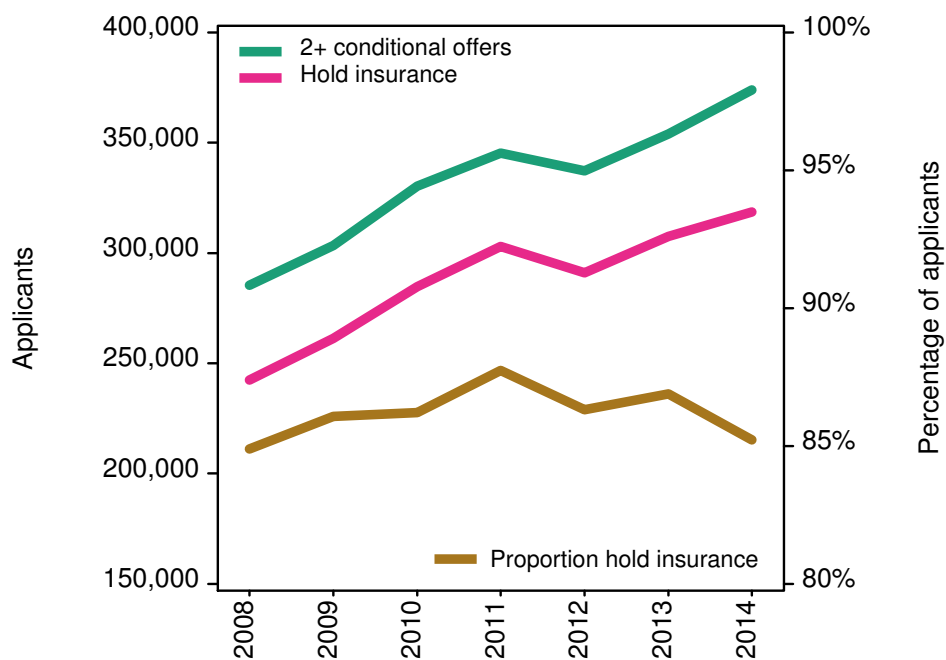


Insurance choices set by 85 per cent with two offers to total a record 318,600 in 2014

The increase in applications in combination with increases in offer making to these applications led to a steady increase in the number of applicants in each cycle who have two or more conditional offers to choose between. In every cycle since 2008, with the exception of the 2012 cycle, the number of these applicants who received at least two conditional offers increased. This group of applicants, those with the potential to make an insurance choice, increased by 19,900 to 373,800 (+5.6 per cent) in 2014, the highest on record.

The proportion of these applicants that take up their option of setting an insurance choice is very high, typically over 85 per cent. In 2014 the proportion setting an insurance was 85 per cent, lower than the 88 per cent in 2011 and similar to levels in 2008 and 2009. This translates into similar pattern of increases in the number of applicants setting an insurance choice. In 2014, 318,600 made an insurance choice, up by 11,000 (+3.6 per cent) from 2013 and also the highest number on record.

Figure 45 Main scheme applicants with 2 or more conditional offers and proportion holding an insurance choice.



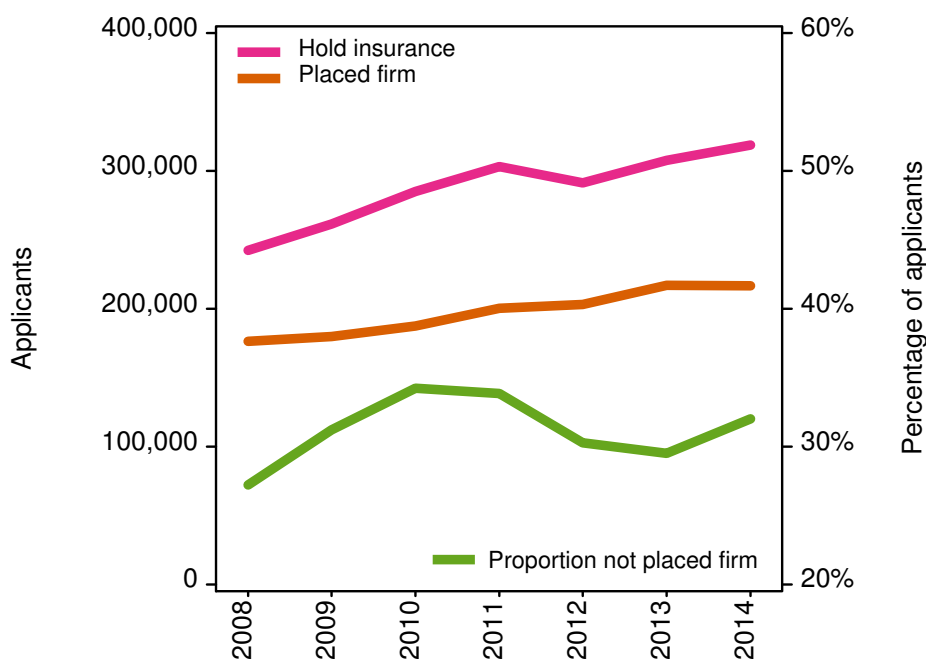
Over 100,000 considered by insurance as those not placed at firm increase to 34 per cent

The number of 18 year old applicants holding an insurance choice increased in 2014 by 11,000 (3.6 per cent) to 318,600. Applicants that meet the conditions of their firm choice are usually accepted through the firm choice route. The number of these applicants placed through their firm choice increased in each cycle between 2008 and 2013. In 2014 although the number of applicants holding insurance offers increased the number of those getting placed at their firm choice stayed about the same (216,600 placed through their firm choice, 200 fewer than in 2013, a slight decrease of 0.1 per cent).

The applicants holding an insurance choice that were not placed through their firm choice are also considered against the conditions of their insurance choice. The proportion of applicants with an insurance choice that were not placed through their firm choice, and so considered by their insurance choice provider, increased from 27 to 34 per cent between 2008 and 2011, then decreased in both 2012 and 2013 to reach 30 per cent by 2013. In 2014, it increased by two percentage points (9 per cent proportionally) to 32 per cent, the highest level since 2011.

In total, 102,000 insurance offer holders were considered by their insurance provider in 2014, higher than recent cycles and only just lower than the highest value recorded in the period of 102,600 in 2011.

Figure 46 Number of applicants holding an insurance choice placed at their firm choice



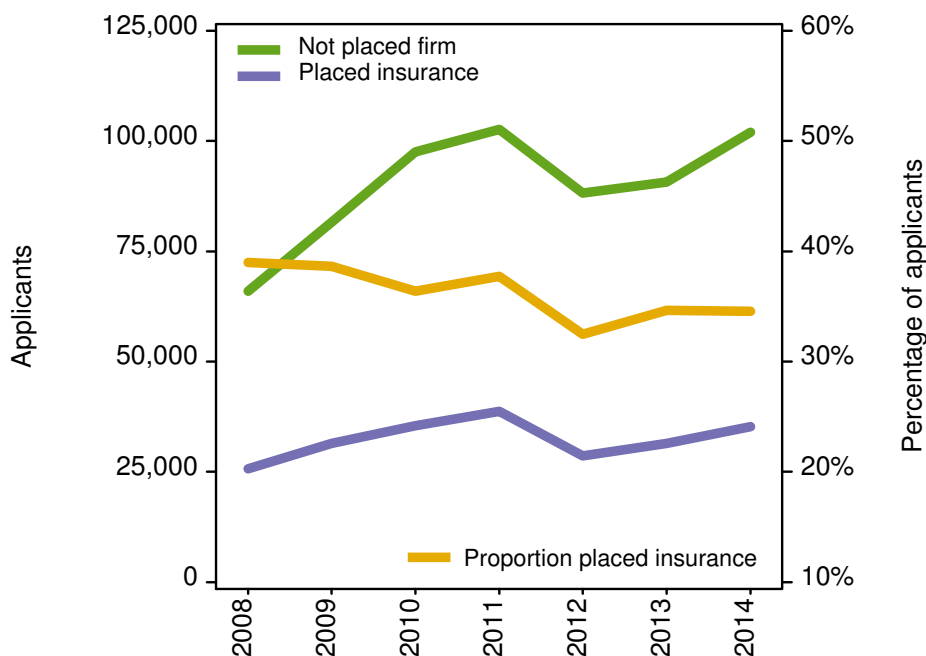
Increase in insurance accepts mainly result of lower chance of being placed at firm

The number of applicants holding an insurance choice that were not placed at their firm choice increased in 2014 to 102,000 (+11,300, +12.4 per cent). There are three outcomes for these applicants, they may be placed through their insurance choice, they may be placed through Clearing or they may be unemployed.

The proportion of these applicants placed at their insurance choice decreased from 39 per cent in 2008 to 33 per cent in 2012. It has since increased to 35 per cent in 2013, and remained at this level in 2014.

This unchanged proportion, coupled with the increase in the number of applicants with an insurance choice (4 per cent proportionally) and an increase in the proportion not being placed at their firm (9 per cent proportionally), results in an increase in the number of these applicants placed through their insurance choice of 3,800 (+12.1 per cent) to 35,200. This is higher than in 2012 and 2013 but lower than 2011.

Figure 47 Proportion of insurance choice holders placed at their insurance.



Changes between A level results day and end of cycle

A relatively small number of applicants who are placed at their firm or insurance choice on A level results day do not go on to take up that place. By the end of the cycle these applicants are either placed at another provider or are unplaced. Those applicants may be placed at another provider through either the Adjustment process, or by being released from their results day place and then being accepted to another provider through Clearing.

This section reports trends in how applicants are using these routes to change the provider they are placed at between A level results day and the end of the cycle. To aid interpretation it covers the group most likely to have their initial firm or insurance choices confirmed at A level results day: 18 year olds from England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Over 5,000 18 year olds changed provider after results day in 2014, twice the number in 2011

On A level results day in 2014 173,200 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland or Wales were recorded as placed at either their firm (155,300) or insurance (17,900) choice. Of these applicants 12,200 (7 per cent) of these were no longer placed at that choice by the end of the cycle, and of these 5,600 (3 per cent) were placed at an alternative course.

These numbers are similar to those for the 2013 and 2012 cycles but higher than in 2011 and earlier cycles. Most of this increase has come from applicants who are placed at another provider. Over twice as many of these applicants were placed at another provider in 2014 than in 2011.

There were 8,300 applicants placed at their firm choice on A level results day in 2014 who did not take up that place. This is broadly the same number as in 2012 and 2013, and around 3,000 more (over 50 per cent higher) than 2010 and 2011. Of the 8,300 that did not take up their firm choice place in 2014, around 40 per cent (3,300) took up a place at another provider.

The number placed through their insurance choice on A level results day who did not take up that place increased by 1,000 (+37 per cent) between 2011 and 2014 to 3,900. Of these, around 60 per cent were placed at another provider by the end of the cycle.

Applicants placed at insurance are six times more likely to change provider than those at firm

In 2014 around 5.3 per cent of 18 year old English, Northern Irish and Welsh applicants placed at their firm choice on A level results day were not placed at that provider by the end of the cycle. For those placed at their insurance choice 21.7 per cent are not placed with that provider by the end of the cycle.

For both routes the proportion placed making a change in 2014 is slightly lower than 2012 and 2013 cycles but much higher than in 2010 and 2011, with most of the increase resulting from those changing provider.

Of applicants placed at their insurance choice in 2014, 12.7 per cent have moved to be placed at another provider by the end of the cycle. This is six times higher than the rate for those placed at their firm choice (2.2 per cent). These rates are similar to those in 2013 and 2012 but around twice as high as those in 2010 and 2011.

Figure 48 Number of 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales placed at firm or insurance choice on A level results day who do not take up that place

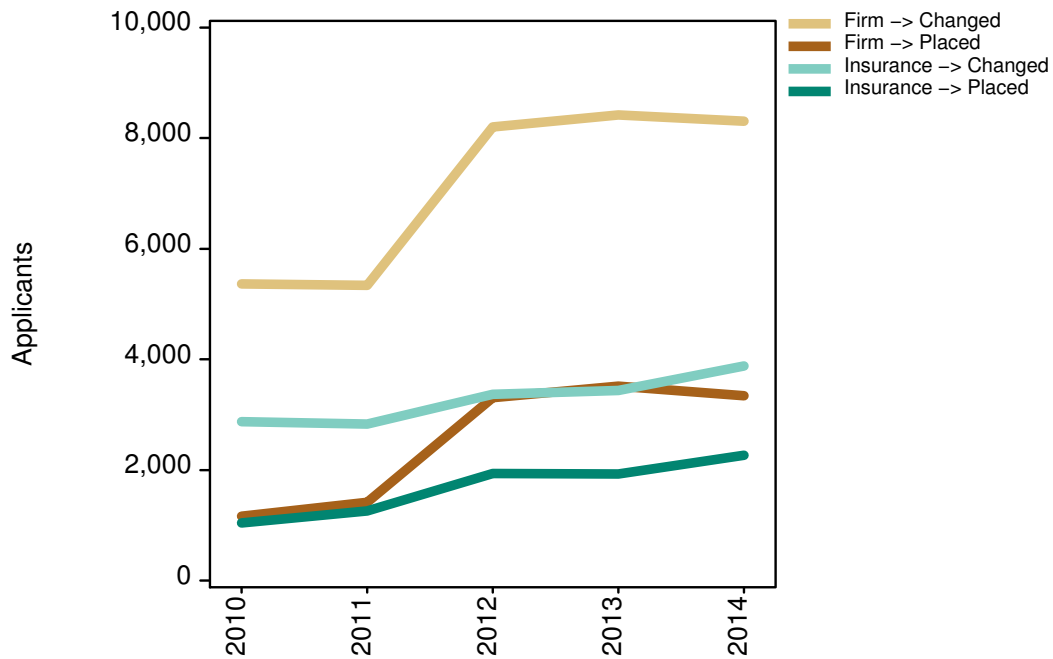
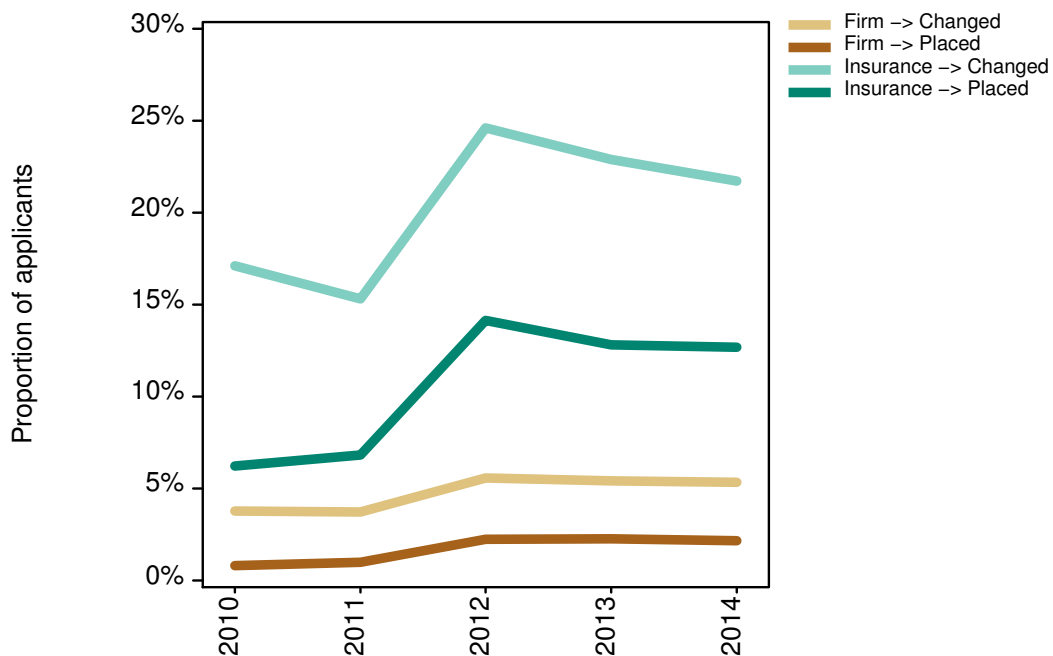


Figure 49 Proportion of 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales placed at firm or insurance choice on A level results day who do not take up that place



Applicants changing provider from firm use Clearing nearly four times as much as Adjustment

The majority of applicants that do not take up their firm choice place from A level results day are unplaced at the end of the cycle. Between 2010 and 2014 this has been a fairly constant number of between 4,000 and 5,000. In 2014, 5,000 of these applicants were unplaced at the end of the cycle, 2,600 were placed through Clearing and 700 were placed through Adjustment.

Of those placed at another provider by the end of the cycle the majority, around 80 per cent, are placed through Clearing with the remainder, around 20 per cent, placed through the Adjustment route. In 2014 3.6 times as many of these applicants were placed through Clearing than Adjustment.

Increase in applicants changing from their insurance choice driven by use of Clearing

Of 18 year old English, Northern Irish and Welsh applicants who are placed at their insurance choice on A level results a fairly constant number (between 1,200 and 1,500) are unplaced at the end of the cycle. In 2014 this number was 1,500, the same as in 2010.

Over the same time period the number securing a place with another provider through Clearing has more than doubled from 1,000 in 2010 to 2,300 in 2014. This means that whereas at the start of the period around the same number would be unplaced as placed through Clearing, in 2014 there are 50 per cent more of these applicants placed through Clearing than unplaced at the end of the cycle. Negligible numbers of insurance placed applicants use Adjustment.

In 2014, there are around the same number of applicants placed through Clearing that were placed through their firm choice (2,600) or through their insurance choice (2,300) on A level results day.

Figure 50 Number of 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales placed at firm choice on A level results day by position at the end of the cycle

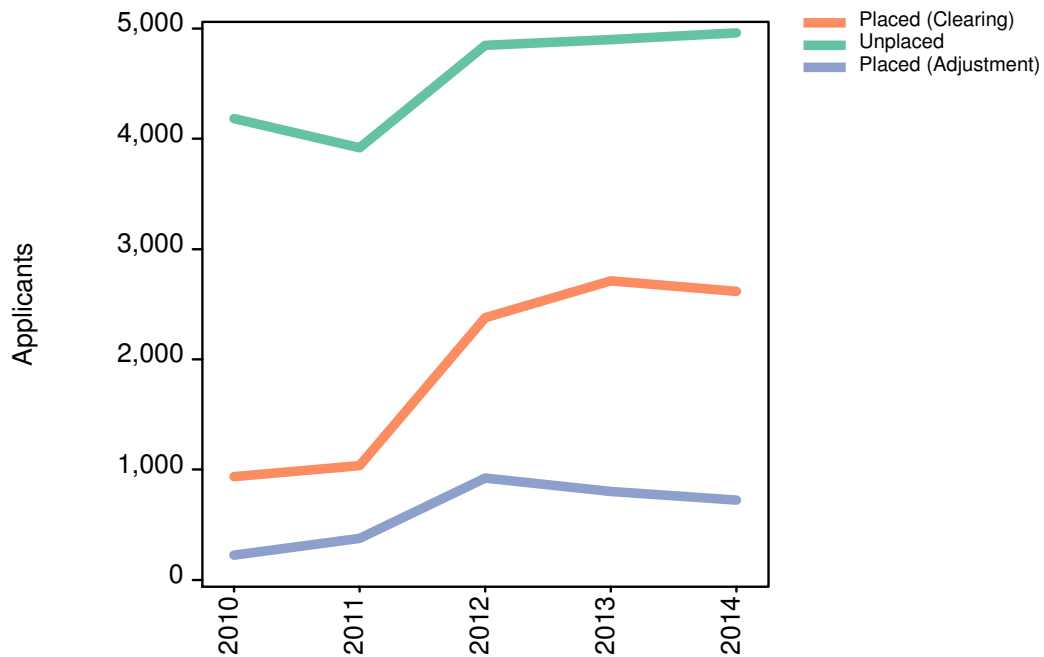
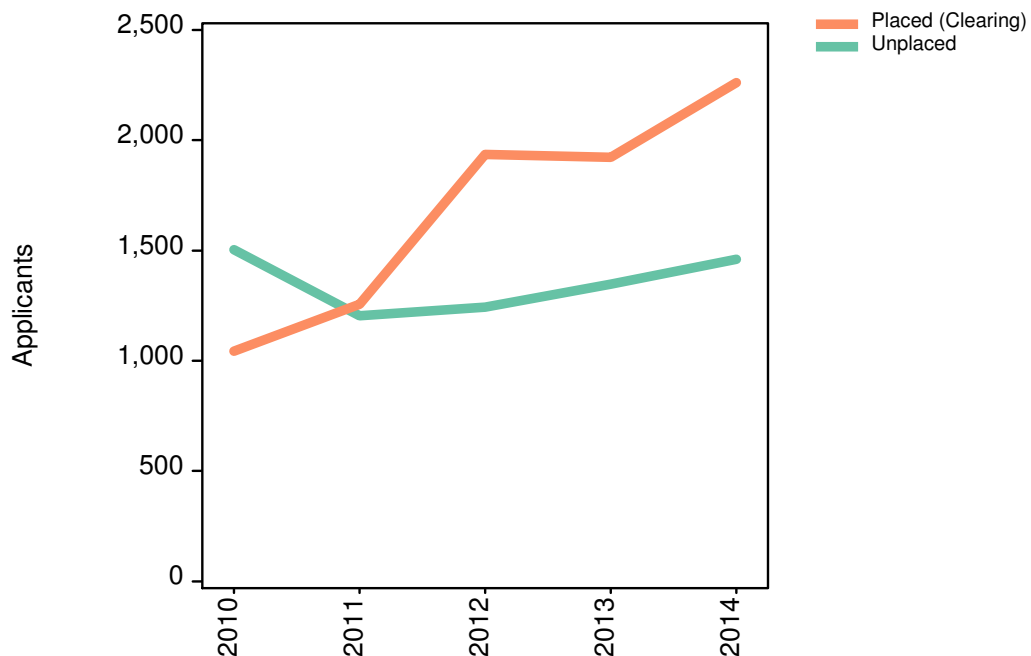


Figure 51 Number of 18 year old applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales placed at insurance choice on A level results day by position at the end of the cycle



Applicants more likely to stay at firm or insurance if chosen from a wider set of offers

Applicants that apply to five courses in the main scheme may receive up to five offers from providers. To set a firm choice the applicant must receive at least one offer, and to set an insurance choice at least two offers.

Figure 52 and Figure 53 show the proportion of applicants placed at their firm choice (Figure 52) and insurance choice (Figure 53) on A level results day who do not take up that place by the number of offers they received.

In each cycle applicants are less likely to take up their place if the firm or the insurance choice that they were placed at on A level results day was selected from a smaller pool of offers. Applicants choosing from the maximum number of offers are around half as likely to change than those selecting from the minimum number of offers.

The change rate has increased for all numbers of offers, mostly between 2011 and 2012, reflecting the overall pattern.

Where no choice of offers 12 per cent change from firm and 36 per cent from insurance

In 2014 applicants placed at their firm choice on results day who had selected that offer from a choice of five had the lowest rate (4.7 per cent) of not being at that provider by the end of the cycle. Applicants placed at a firm choice resulting from a single offer had a much higher rate (11.9 per cent) of not being at that provider by the end of the cycle.

Those placed at their insurance choice on A level results day have much higher rates of not being placed at that provider by the end of the cycle but show a similar pattern by the number of offers received. In 2014, 36 per cent of applicants who were placed at their insurance choice after receiving two offers (and therefore had only one choice they could set as insurance) were not placed at that provider by the end of the cycle. Amongst those applicants that received five offers, and so had four offers to choose between for insurance, a lower proportion (20 per cent) did not take up their insurance place.

Figure 52 Proportion of 18 year old five choice applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales placed at firm choice on A level results day who do not take up that place by number of offers received

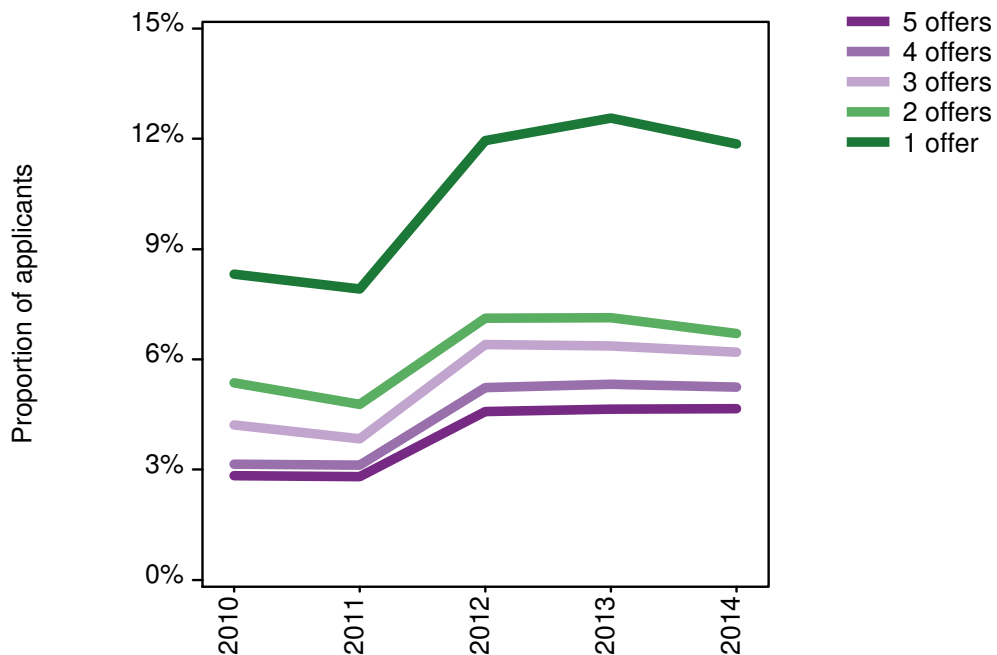
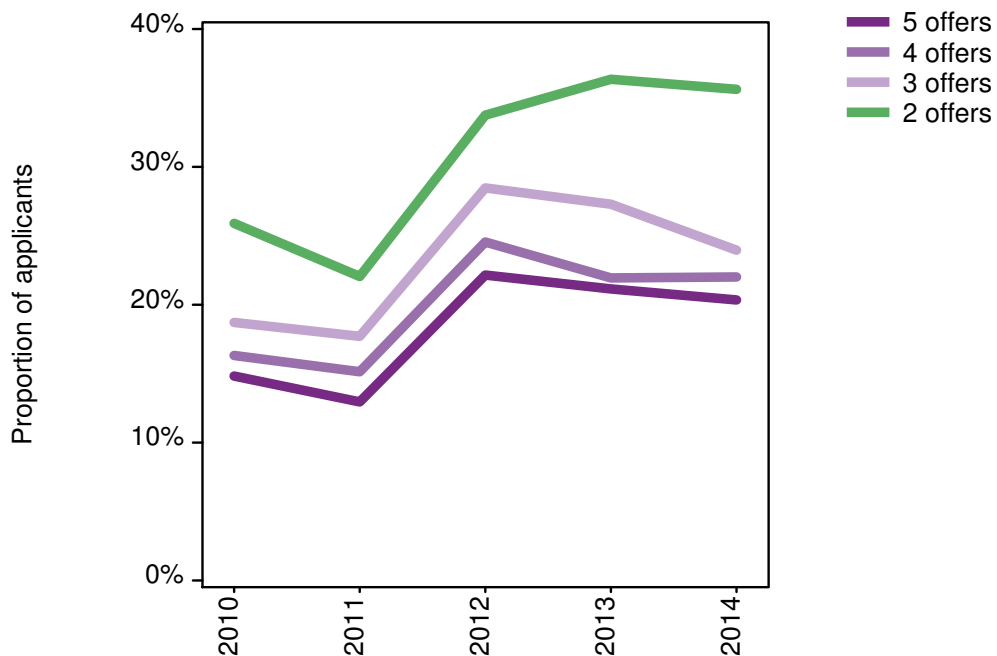


Figure 53 Proportion of 18 year old five choice applicants from England, Northern Ireland and Wales placed at insurance choice on A level results day who do not take up that place by number of offers received



Recruitment changes for providers between 2011-12 and 2014-15

Larger providers who have been constant users of UCAS services between 2007 and 2014 (154 in total) account for the large majority of acceptances (over 97 per cent). The 2014-15 entry year is the third academic year under the set of changes made to tuition fees and student number controls. The following analysis reports changes in total recruitment (acceptances from all domiciles) by entry year for this set of constant UCAS higher education providers, comparing 2014-15 with the previous year and with three years ago. The number of acceptances to each provider always varies from cycle to cycle.

Many providers have more acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year than to 2013-14 but not as much as 2011-12

Figure 54 and Figure 55 show the share of providers that have increased or decreased their total recruitment between 2013-14 and 2014-15 (Figure 54), or between the longer time period of 2011-12 and 2014-15 (Figure 55). The share of providers is shown weighted by their acceptances at the start of the period.

For changes in total recruitment between the most recent two entry years, 2013-14 and 2014-15, the largest two categories in the distribution are for providers with around 10 per cent more or about the same number of acceptances in the two years. Weighted by size in the earlier year, 35 per cent of providers have around 10 per cent more acceptances in this entry year than the last, whilst 43 per cent of them are around the same size, and 18 per cent have around 10 per cent fewer acceptances.

There was a wider range of provider-level outcomes when comparing recruitment over the longer period of 2011-12 to 2014-15. A slightly greater share of providers have reduced in size compared with recruitment three years ago than increased in size. This is despite a greater share of providers increasing recruitment in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14. The largest two categories in this distribution are for providers with around 10 per cent fewer or about the same number of acceptances compared with three years ago. Across the three year period 26 per cent of providers reduced in size by around 10 per cent and 11 per cent of providers reduced in size by around 20 per cent, compared with around 20 per cent increasing recruitment by around 10 per cent and 9 per cent increasing by around 20 per cent.

Figure 54 Provider distribution of proportional changes in total recruitment between 2013-14 and 2014-15 entry years (provider distribution weighted by 2013-14 recruitment)

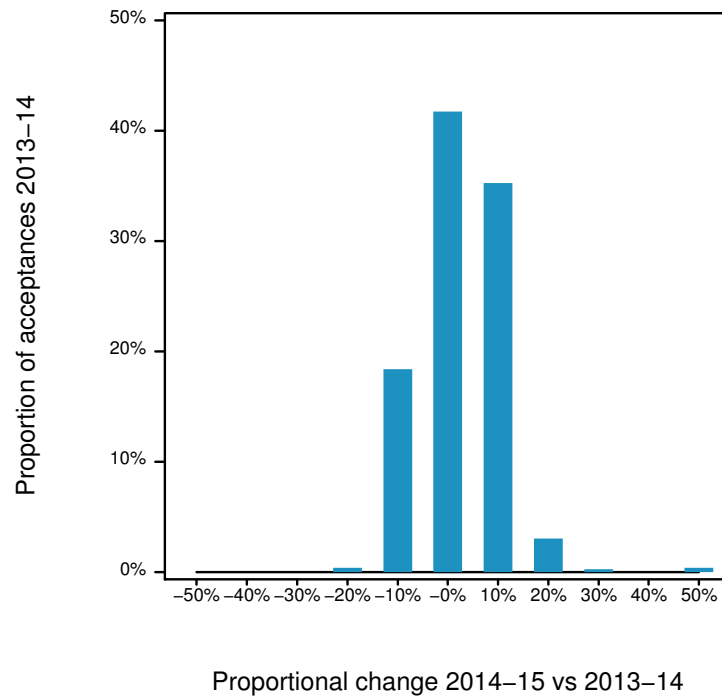
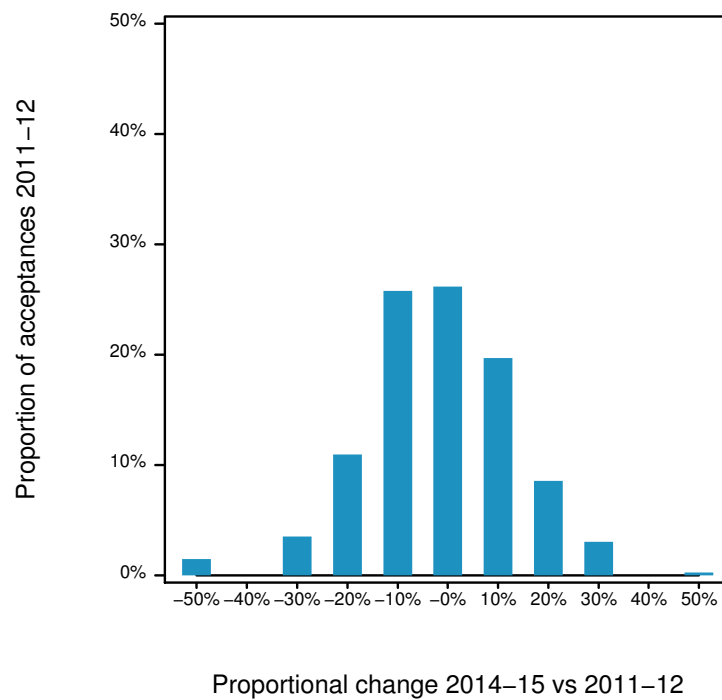


Figure 55 Provider distribution of proportional changes in total recruitment between 2011-12 and 2014-15 entry years (provider distribution weighted by 2011-12 recruitment)



Provider-level changes in total recruitment

Figure 56 shows the changes in 2014-15 recruitment relative to 2011-12 and 2013-14 for individual providers. The plot is limited to larger providers that have recruited through UCAS since 2007.

The vertical axis shows the total proportional change in recruitment between the most recent two entry years, 2013-14 and 2014-15. The horizontal axis shows the proportional change in recruitment over the longer time period since 2011-12.

- Providers in the upper half of the graph were larger in 2014-15 than 2013-14 (those below were smaller)
- Providers in the right hand side of the graph were larger in 2014-15 than 2011-12 (those to the left were smaller)

Recruitment increased for 62 per cent of providers between 2013-14 and 2014-15

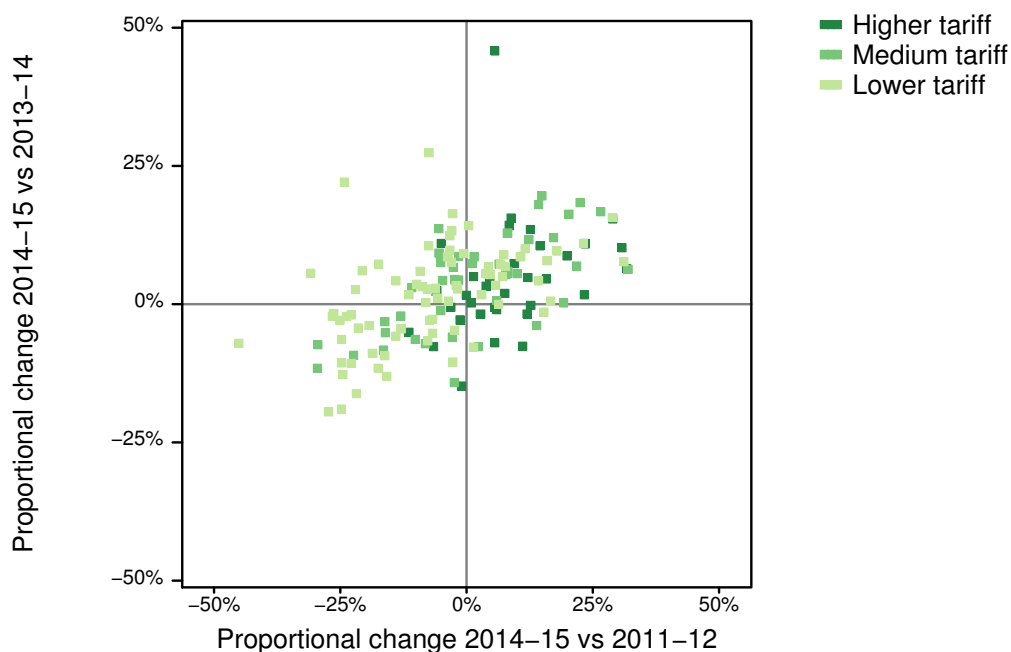
62 per cent of providers had higher recruitment in 2014-15 than in the previous entry year 2013-14, 37 per cent had lower recruitment in this period and recruitment for one provider stayed the same, with total recruitment to this group of providers increasing by 2.5 per cent. Total recruitment to providers that increased recruitment in 2014-15 was 7 per cent higher than in 2013-14.

Just over half of providers accepted fewer applicants in 2014-15 compared with 2011-12

There has been a wide range in changes in provider-level total recruitment between 2011-12 and 2014-15 and with changes of between -20 per cent and +20 per cent being common. Across this group of providers total recruitment is 1.5 per cent lower in 2014-15 than it was in 2011-12.

54 per cent of providers reduced in size between 2011-12 and 2014-15. The total number of acceptances to these providers is 12 per cent lower in 2014-15 than it was in 2011-12. Of the providers with higher recruitment in 2014-15 compared with the previous entry year 60 per cent recruited more than in 2011-12.

Figure 56 Provider level changes in recruitment for 2014-15, relative to 2013-14 and 2011-12 recruitment



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 that applicants hold when they apply or enter higher education can vary, depending on which country they are from and by their age. English 18 year old applicants are the largest single group of applicants by country and age, therefore this section describes the type and strength of qualifications held by this group and how they have changed in the 2014 cycle.

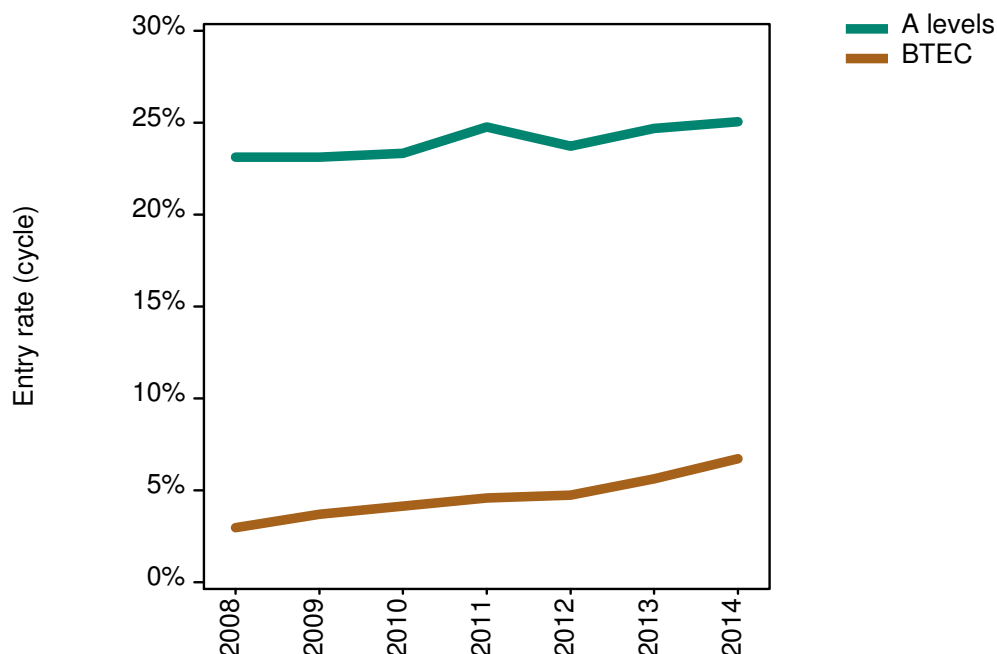
A quarter of the 18 year old population in England entered holding at least one A level in 2014

Figure 57 reports the proportion of the English 18 year old population that are accepted to enter higher education (the entry rate) split by the type of qualification held by accepted applicants. A levels are the most widely held qualification for this group – 25.0 per cent of the English 18 year old population were accepted for entry in 2014 and were holding at least one A level. This is 0.4 percentage points higher than for 2013, and the greatest proportion of the population in any cycle.

6.7 per cent of the 18 year old population entered holding BTECs, over twice the rate in 2008

The next mostly widely held qualification for this group is BTECs. In 2014, 6.7 per cent of English 18 year olds were accepted for entry holding BTECs, an increase of 1.1 percentage points, 19.6 per cent proportionally. This continues a pattern of increases in each cycle that has seen this entry rate rise by 3.7 percentage points (more than doubling) since 2008.

Figure 57 English 18 year old entry rate by type of qualification held

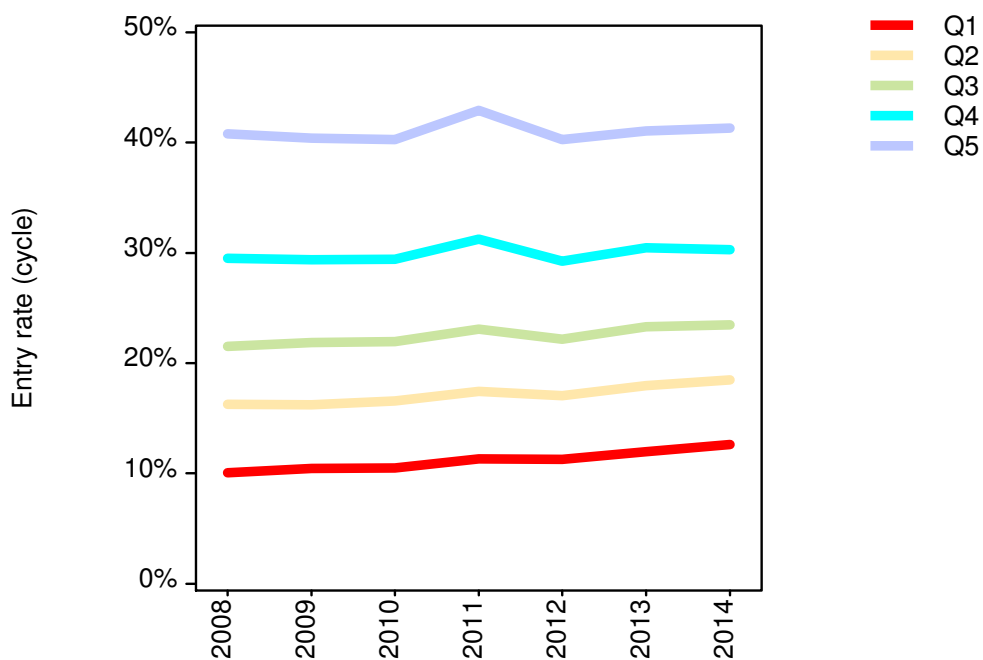


Entry rate for those holding A levels reaches new highs for more disadvantaged applicants in 2014 but remains highly differentiated by background

Figure 58 shows the proportion of the English 18 year old population in each POLAR2 area who are accepted to higher education and hold at least one A level. There is a differentiation in these entry rates across the groups, with the young people in more advantaged areas being substantially more likely to enter higher education and hold A levels than those living in more disadvantaged areas.

Of 18 year olds living in those areas with the lowest levels of higher education participation (Q1), 12.6 per cent held A levels and were accepted to higher education in 2014. This is an increase of 0.6 percentage points from 2013, continuing a trend of annual increases that has seen this rate increase (proportionally) by 26 per cent since 2008. The entry rates for 18 year olds holding A levels from other types of areas continued to increase in 2014, with the exception of Q4, where it decreased slightly. However, no increases were as large as those in 2013. The entry rates from the two most advantaged areas (Q4 and Q5) did not return to the level seen in 2011, but in other areas the entry rates were at the highest level seen across the period.

Figure 58 English 18 year old entry rates by POLAR2 group (accepted applicants holding A levels)

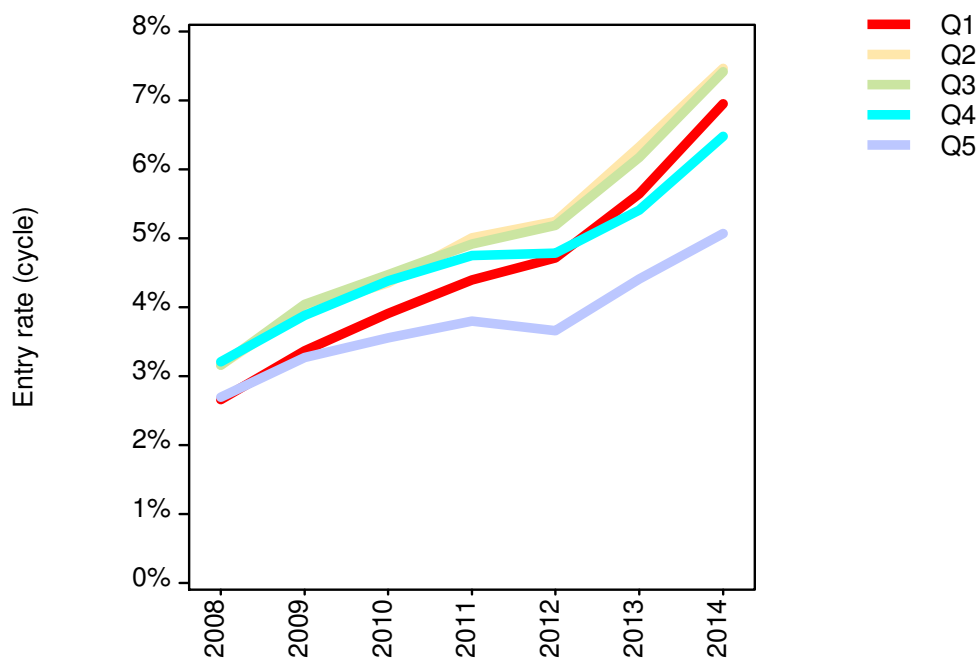


Entry rates for those holding BTECs show little difference by background, increased to new highs for all groups in 2014, and more than double 2008 levels in most areas

The entry rate for the English 18 year old population holding BTECs is lower than the entry rate for those holding A levels, but has increased substantially for all groups since 2008, and shows relatively little differentiation by background. Around 7 per cent of the 18 year old population in each background group were accepted for entry in 2014 holding BTECs, with the exception of the most advantaged areas, where 5.1 per cent of the population were accepted and held BTECs.

For all background groups, with the exception of the most advantaged (Q5), the entry rates of those holding BTECs increased in 2014 by more than 1 percentage point (around 20 per cent proportionally) since 2013, to their highest recorded values. These entry rates have increased over the period and in 2014 were between 2 and 2.6 times the rates in 2008. For 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas the entry rates holding BTECs increased by 0.7 percentage points (+15 per cent proportionally) to be just under twice the rate in 2008.

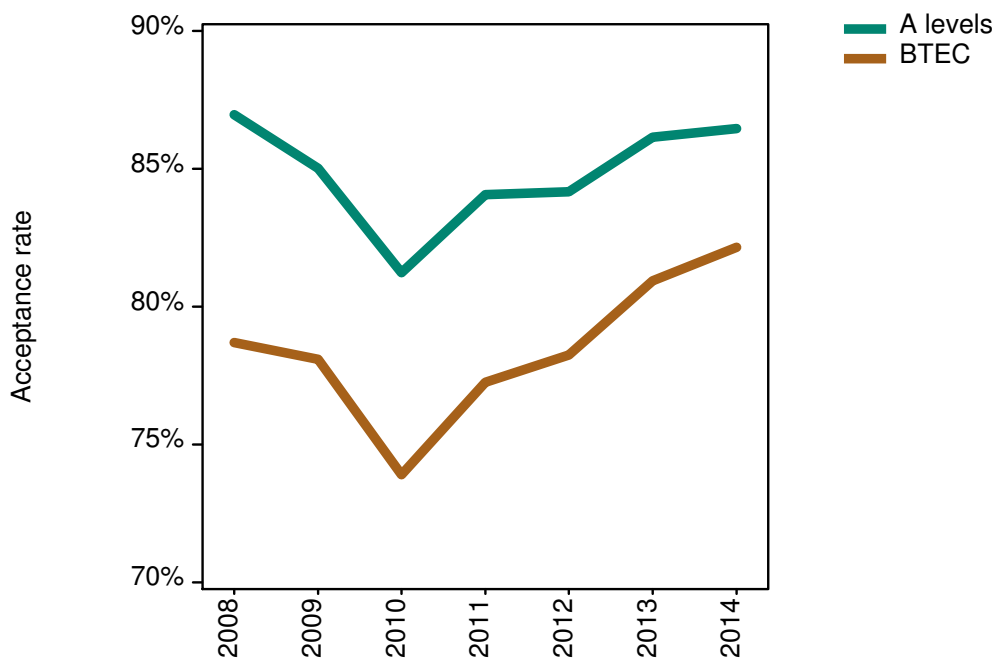
Figure 59 English 18 year old entry rates by POLAR2 group (accepted applicants holding BTECs)



Acceptance rates for applicants holding BTECs increases

Figure 60 shows the acceptance rate (the proportion of applicants accepted for entry) for English 18 year olds by the type of qualification held by applicants at the end of the cycle. The acceptance rate for those who hold A levels is higher than the acceptance rate for those holding BTECs. In each cycle since 2010, the increase in acceptance rate for those holding BTECs has been larger than the increase in acceptance rate for those holding A levels. The difference in acceptance rates has reduced from 8 percentage points in 2008 to only 4 percentage points in 2014. For those holding BTECs the acceptance rate in 2014 was 82.2 per cent, the highest in the period. For those holding A levels the acceptance rate was 86.5 per cent, 0.5 percentage points lower than in 2008.

Figure 60 Acceptance rates for English 18 year olds by type of qualification held

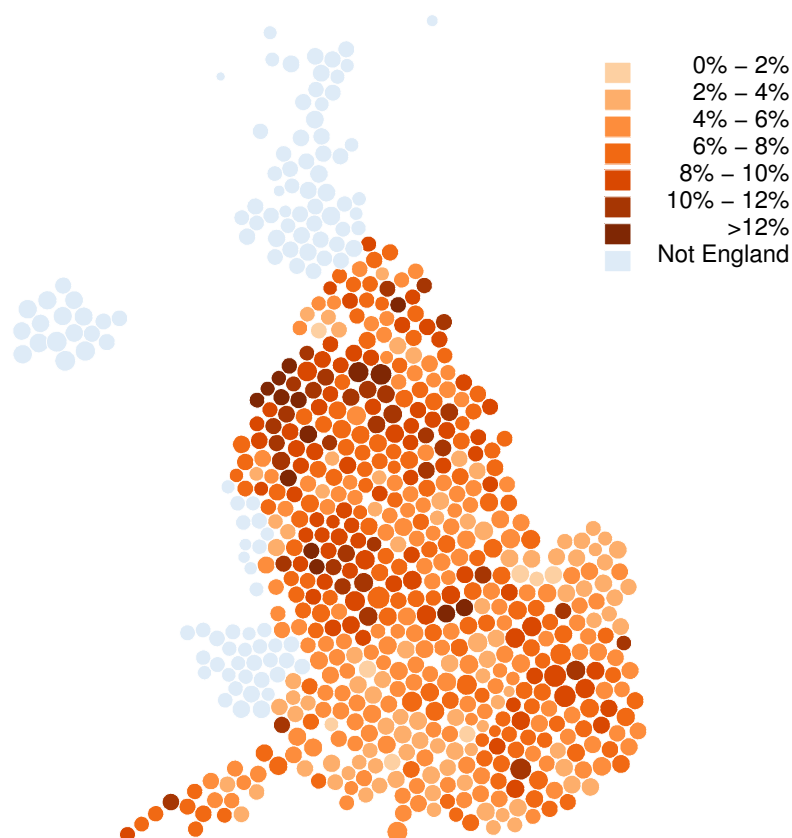


Wide range and strong geographical pattern to holding BTEC 18 year old entry rates

For England as a whole in 2014 6.7 per cent of the 18 year population entered higher education through UCAS and was recorded as holding a BTEC qualification.

There is a strong geographical range and patterning of this entry rate across parliamentary constituencies in England (outside of England BTEC entry rates are very low). The proportion of the 18 year old population entering higher education and holding a BTEC in 2014 varied from 1 per cent to 17 per cent across constituencies. The constituencies with the highest BTEC entry rates are typically found in North West and West Midland regions, together with sections of the North East and South West regions. Constituencies with the lowest BTEC entry rates are typically in the southern and eastern areas of England.

Figure 61 English 18 year old entry rates by parliamentary constituency (accepted applicants holding BTECs)



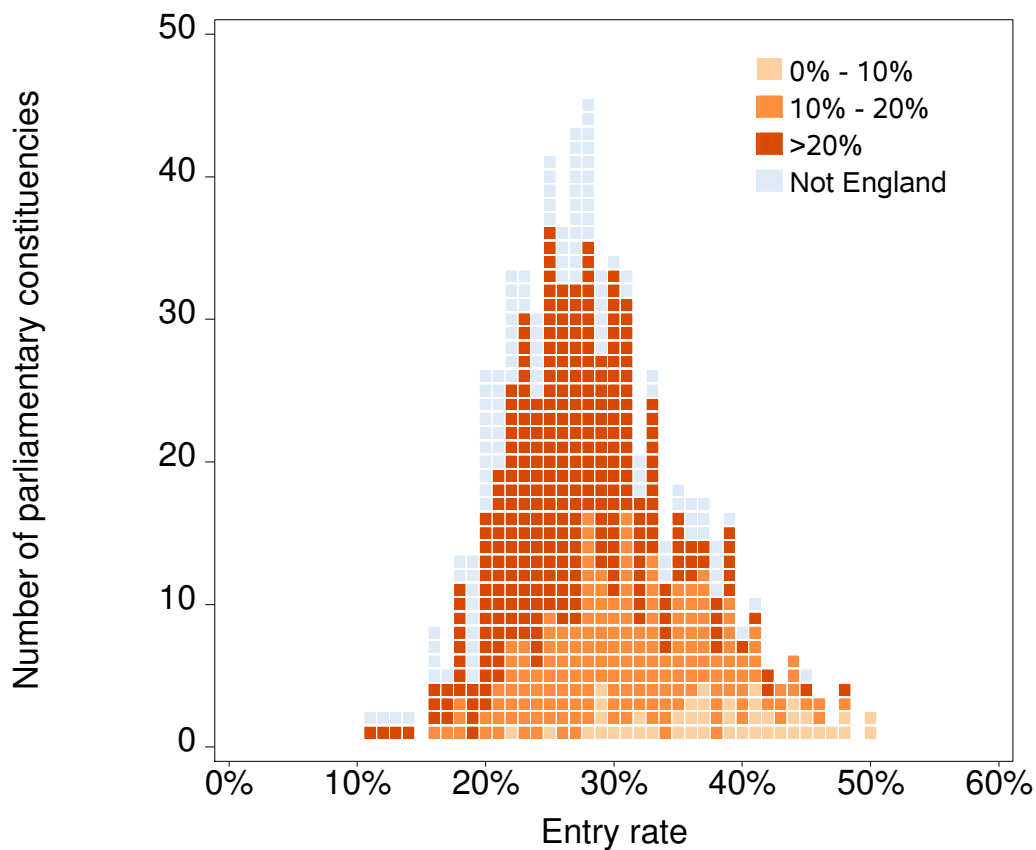
Acceptances holding BTECs form a smaller share of acceptances higher entry rate constituencies

The wide range in the proportion of the 18 year old population entering higher education and holding BTEC across constituencies is reflected in a wide range in the proportion of 18 year old acceptances that hold a BTEC by constituency.

In England there are 368 constituencies (58 per cent of English constituencies) where 20 per cent or more of 18 year old acceptances hold BTECs. These constituencies with the highest proportion of acceptances holding BTECs typically have overall entry rates at or below the English average.

There are 43 constituencies (8 per cent) where the share of 18 year old acceptances holding BTECs is less than 10 per cent. These constituencies typically have overall 18 year old entry rates that are higher than average.

Figure 62 Distribution of English 18 year old entry rates by parliamentary constituency and share of acceptances holding BTECs



Acceptance and attainment rates by qualification profile for English applicants

One of the changes to higher education in 2012 was the introduction of qualification-related criteria for student number controls at English providers. Specifically, for most courses at HEFCE-funded providers, entrants into the 2012-13 academic year whose qualifications were listed in a set of 'high grade combinations' were exempt from number control limits. For example, entrants holding A level qualifications with grades of AAB or higher (denoted AAB+) were exempt from number control limits.

For entrants into the 2013-14 academic year, the list of qualifications and grade combinations that were exempt from number control limits was widened. As shorthand, the high grade qualification combinations that were exempt from the number control arrangements for 2013-14 are referred to as ABB+ in this report, reflecting that the boundary for exemption amongst A level qualifications was changed from AAB to ABB. The same combinations of A level grades were exempt from number control limits in 2014-15. The ABB+ grouping is used to look at trends over this period.

Acceptance rates for ABB+ English 18 year olds increased in 2014, new high for BTECs

The acceptance rate for English 18 year olds holding ABB+ has varied between 88 per cent and 91 per cent over the past six cycles. In the 2014 cycle it increased by 0.3 percentage points to 90.2 per cent, higher than all cycles except 2011.

The acceptance rate for applicants holding ABB+ from A levels has varied between 90 per cent and 92 per cent over this period and has remained around 8 to 9 percentage points higher than the acceptance rate of those holding ABB+ from BTECs (which has ranged from 81 per cent to 84 per cent over the period).

The acceptance rate for both those holding ABB+ from A levels and those holding BTECs increased in 2014. For A level holders the increase was 0.4 percentage points to 92.0 per cent and for those holding BTECs 0.8 percentage points to 84.5 per cent. This is the highest acceptance rate recorded for those holding ABB+ from BTECs. The acceptance rate for those holding ABB+ from A levels is the second highest (after 2011) recorded in the period.

Acceptance rates for non-ABB+ English 18 year olds increase faster for those holding BTECs

In 2008, the acceptance rate for English 18 year olds not holding ABB+ was 83.3 per cent, this fell to a low of 74.1 per cent in 2010. The acceptance rate then increased in each subsequent cycle to reach 81.4 per cent in 2014, though this remains below the level seen in 2008. In 2014, the acceptance rate for non-ABB+ increased by 0.3 percentage points.

Overall, the acceptance rates for English 18 year olds not holding ABB+ are always lower than for those holding ABB+, but since they have shown more variation than the ABB+ group over the past five cycles the gap in the acceptance rates between the two groups has ranged from 6 percentage points in 2008 to 14 percentage points in 2010 and 2011 (equating to the ABB+ applicants being between 7 per cent and 19 per cent more likely to be accepted than non-ABB+ applicants).

Within those not holding ABB+, the acceptance rate for those with A levels is higher than those with BTECs. This differential has been decreasing over the period from 8 percentage points in 2008 to 3 percentage points in 2014. In 2014, the increase in the acceptance rate for non-ABB+ applicants was 0.4 percentage points for those holding A levels, and 1.5 percentage points for those holding BTECs.

The acceptance rate for those not holding ABB+, but holding A levels, is similar in 2014 to those holding ABB+ from BTEC qualifications.

Figure 63 Acceptance rates for English 18 year olds by level of qualification held

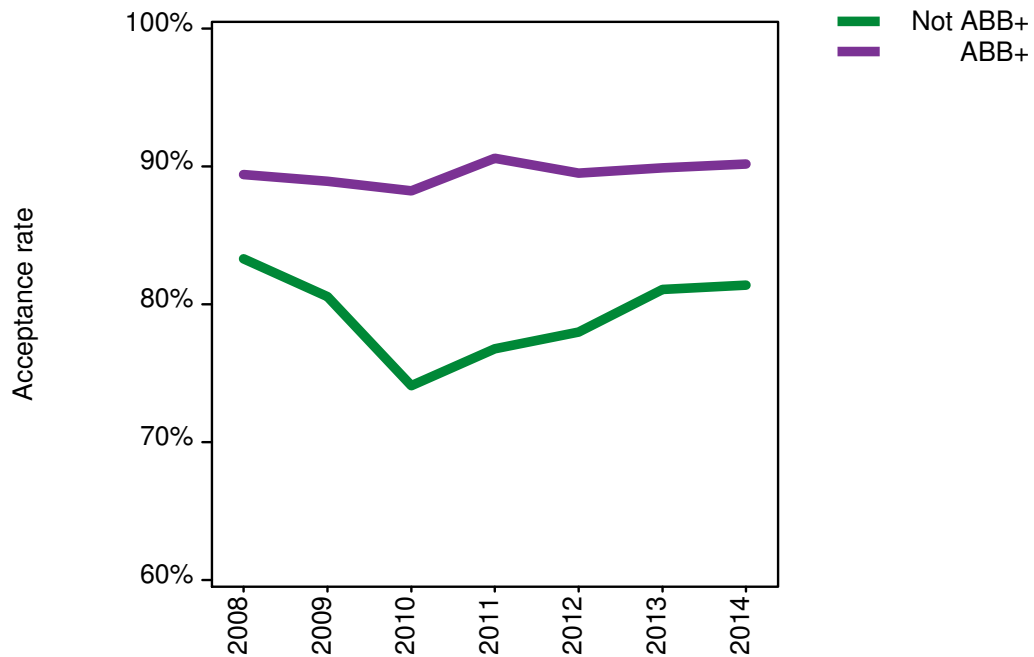
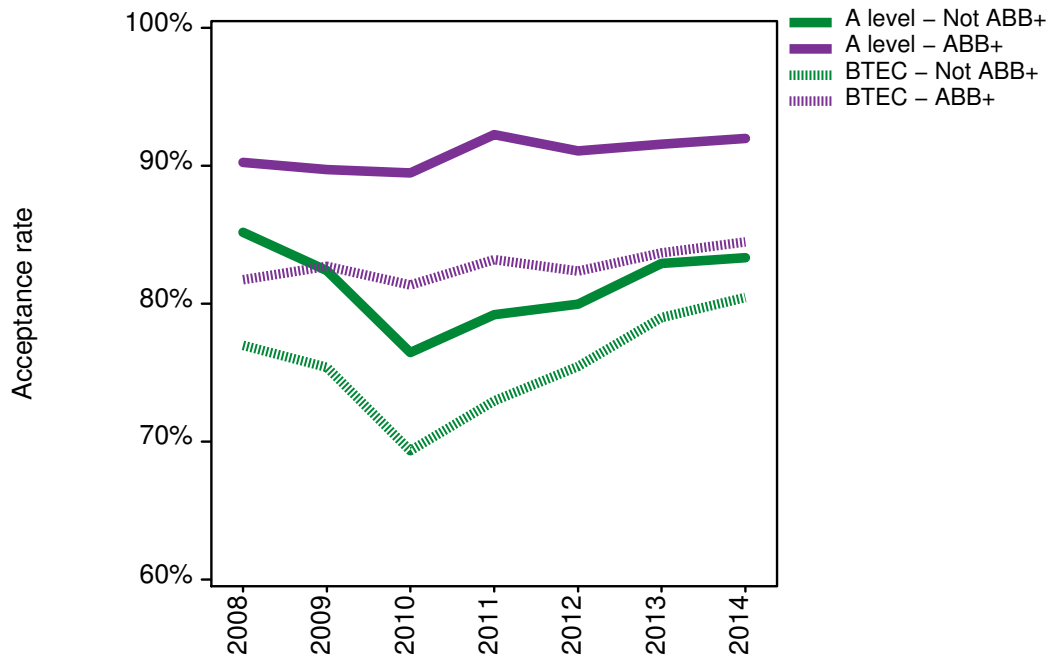


Figure 64 Acceptance rates for English 18 year olds by level and type of qualification held

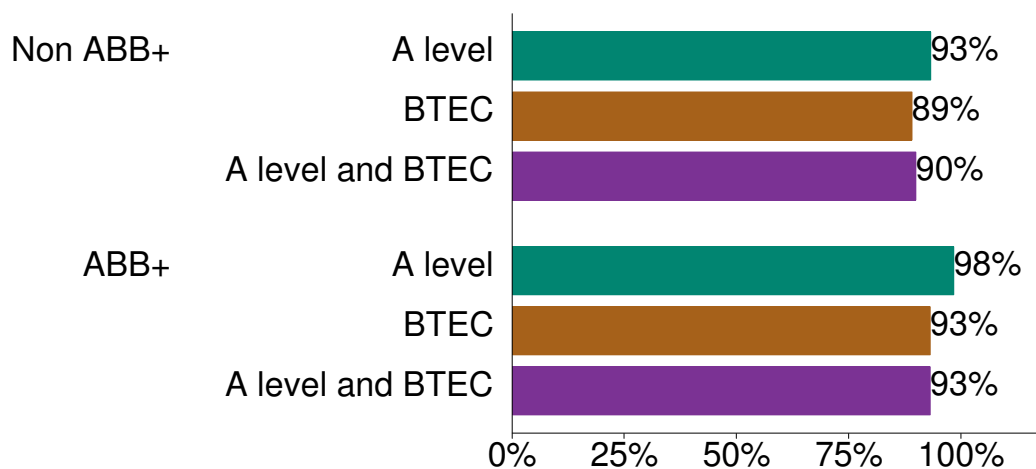


Applicants report that their qualifications were appropriate for application to higher education

The annual survey of applicants takes place in the autumn after results day and around the time that applicants are due to take up their places at higher education. In the survey applicants are asked whether they feel that their post 16 qualifications were right for the higher education course they applied to. This question is asked of all applicants, whether they are placed or unplaced.

Figure 65 shows the proportion of applicants reporting that they felt their qualifications were ‘mostly’ or ‘entirely’ right, for those holding A levels and BTECs and by their level of attainment. Most applicants with these qualifications report that they feel their qualifications were appropriate for the course they applied to – 89 per cent or more in each case. Applicants holding ABB+ are around 3 to 5 percentage points more likely to report that their qualification was right for the course that they applied to than those that are not ABB+. There is a similar sized percentage point difference (3 to 5 percentage points) between those holding A levels without holding a BTEC qualification and those holding a BTEC qualification (with or without an A level). These differences are small compared with the overall reported feeling that with hindsight the qualifications held were appropriate for the courses that they applied to.

Figure 65 Weighted proportion of applicants reporting that qualification type was right for the course applied for by qualification type and level



Attainment of ABB+ relative to predicted grades continued to reduce in 2014

Figure 66 shows the proportion of English 18 year old applicants whose A level attainment at the end of the cycle placed them within the ABB+ group, by the highest three A level grades that they were predicted when they applied. That is, the proportion of applicants in each predicted A level grade profile that goes on to meet the ABB+ definition through A levels.

A level attainment recorded at the end of the cycle is more likely to be lower than predicted than higher. This is reflected in the proportions of those predicted each grade profile who go on to be awarded ABB+ grades. The predicted grade profiles A*A*A*, A*A*A, A*AA, AAA, AAB and ABB would, if achieved, be within the ABB+ list.

Over the past five years almost all of those predicted A*A*A* and A*A*A, and around 95 per cent of those predicted A*AA went on to attain grades in the ABB+ set. The proportion attaining ABB+ decreases as the predicted grade profiles decrease, so that around 80 per cent of those predicted AAA, around 50 per cent of those predicted AAB and around 25 per cent of those predicted ABB go on to attain grades in the ABB+ set. The proportion achieving ABB+ attainment profiles from those predicted BBB (which, if achieved, would not be within the ABB+ group) has been around 8 per cent, reflecting that attainment of higher than the predicted grades is relatively rare.

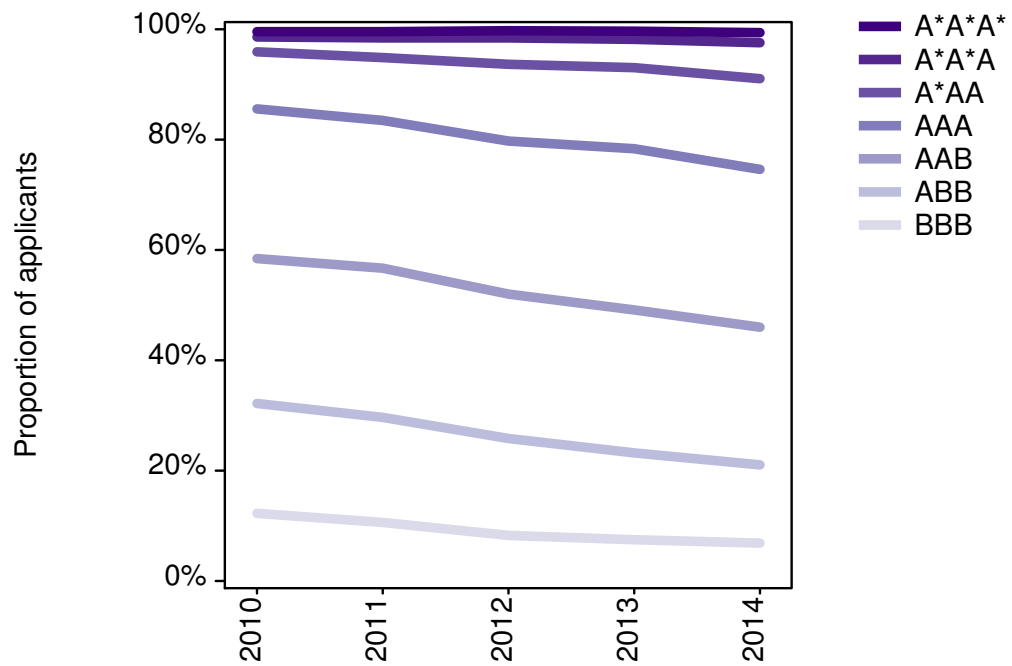
For predicted grade profiles of AAA and lower the proportion attaining ABB+ has decreased in every cycle since 2010.

For English 18 year olds predicted ABB, the proportion attaining ABB+ fell from 32.2 per cent in 2010, 29.6 per cent (2011), 25.9 per cent (2012), 23.2 per cent (2013), to 21.0 per cent in 2014. This is a total decrease over the period of 11.2 percentage points meaning that those predicted ABB in 2014 are around 35 per cent less likely to achieve it than those predicted ABB in 2010.

For those predicted AAB, the proportion attaining ABB+ fell from 58.4 per cent in 2010 to 46.0 per cent in 2014, a reduction of 12.4 percentage points (21 per cent proportionally).

The proportion of those predicted AAA and attaining ABB+ has also fallen across the period, from 85.5 per cent in 2010 to 74.6 per cent in 2014, a reduction of 10.9 percentage points (13 per cent proportionally).

Figure 66 Proportion of English 18 year old applicants whose attainment is in the ABB+ grade list by profile of highest three predicted grades at A level



Proportion of 18 year olds with ABB+ at higher and medium tariff providers falls again in 2014

The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances to English providers holding ABB+ qualifications increased from 35 per cent in 2008 to 42 per cent in 2011. In each cycle since then it has decreased slightly to reach 41 per cent in 2014. The proportion with ABB+ qualifications varies substantially by the tariff group of the provider. Recent trends in this proportion are different for these provider groups.

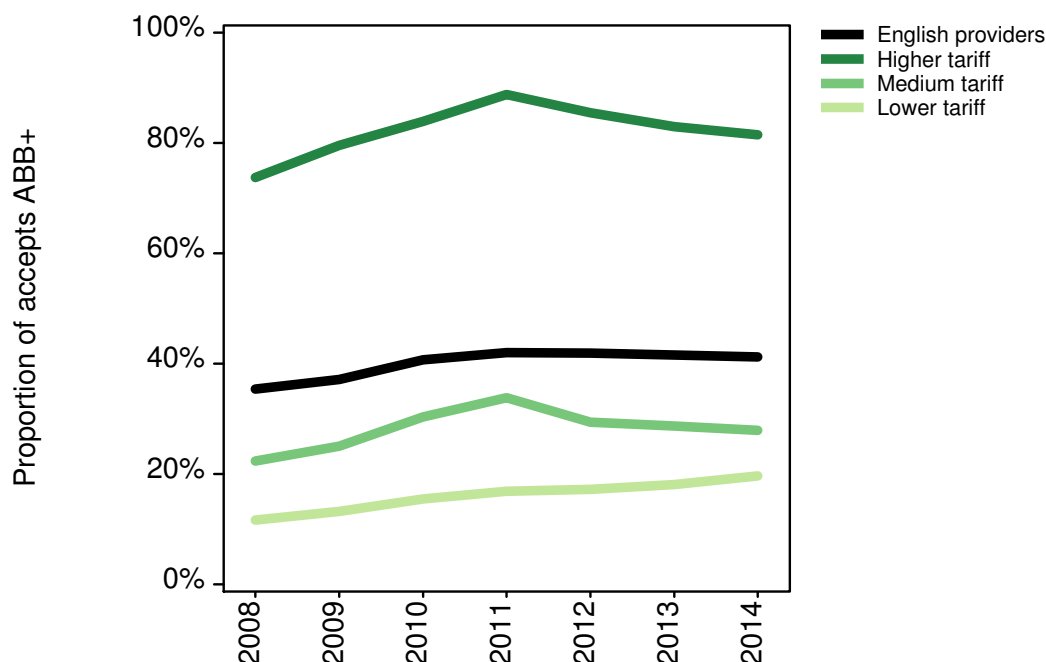
The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances holding ABB+ is much higher at English higher tariff providers than other English providers. At these institutions the proportion increased from 74 per cent in 2008 to a high point of 89 per cent in 2011. Since then it has decreased in each cycle, to reach 82 per cent in 2014. This is a reduction of 1.5 percentage points from 2013, smaller than the decreases in the previous two cycles.

The proportion holding ABB+ at medium tariff institutions increased from 22 per cent to 34 per cent between 2008 and 2011. In 2012 the proportion decreased by 4.5 percentage points and there was a further decrease in 2013 and 2014, each of under a percentage point, to 28 per cent.

Proportion of ABB+ at English lower tariff providers increases to high of 20 per cent in 2014

At lower tariff institutions the proportion holding ABB+ has increased each cycle from 12 per cent in 2008 to 20 per cent in 2014, the highest value recorded in this period. The increase between 2013 and 2014 was 1.6 percentage points, the largest since 2010.

Figure 67 Proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are holding ABB+ qualifications by provider tariff group



Proportion of 18 year olds ABB+ students who have BTECs doubles between 2008 and 2014

For English 18 year olds the ABB+ acceptances are predominantly those who hold A level or BTEC qualifications at higher grades. In 2014, 74 per cent of these ABB+ acceptances were from those holding A levels (87 per cent in 2008) and 23 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 institutions are a composite of the varying contributions of the BTEC and A level sub groups to each provider group.

Acceptances holding BTEC ABB+ increasing but remain only 2 per cent at higher tariff

The proportion of English 18 year old acceptances to these providers who are BTEC ABB+ has been increasing for all provider groups across all years. In 2014 the proportion of 18 year old English acceptances that held ABB+ from BTEC qualifications increased to 15.9 per cent for lower tariff providers and 9.4 per cent for medium tariff providers, representing proportional increases of 17 per cent.

The proportional increase in the share of BTEC ABB+ acceptances at higher tariff providers was higher (over 20 per cent) but the proportion of English 18 year old entrants holding BTEC ABB+ remains much lower (2.1 per cent in 2014) than at other provider types.

Acceptances holding A level ABB+ highest at higher tariff providers but decreasing for all groups

The proportion of acceptances who are A level ABB+ has decreased for all provider groups in each cycle since 2012. Acceptances to higher tariff providers are much more likely to hold ABB+ qualifications from A levels. In 2014 the proportion of 18 year old English acceptances to higher tariff providers who held ABB+ from A level reduced to 77 per cent, the lowest since 2009.

Very few acceptances to lower tariff providers hold ABB+ from A levels, 3.3 per cent in 2014, the lowest recorded value in this period.

Figure 68 Proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are holding A level ABB+ qualifications by provider tariff group

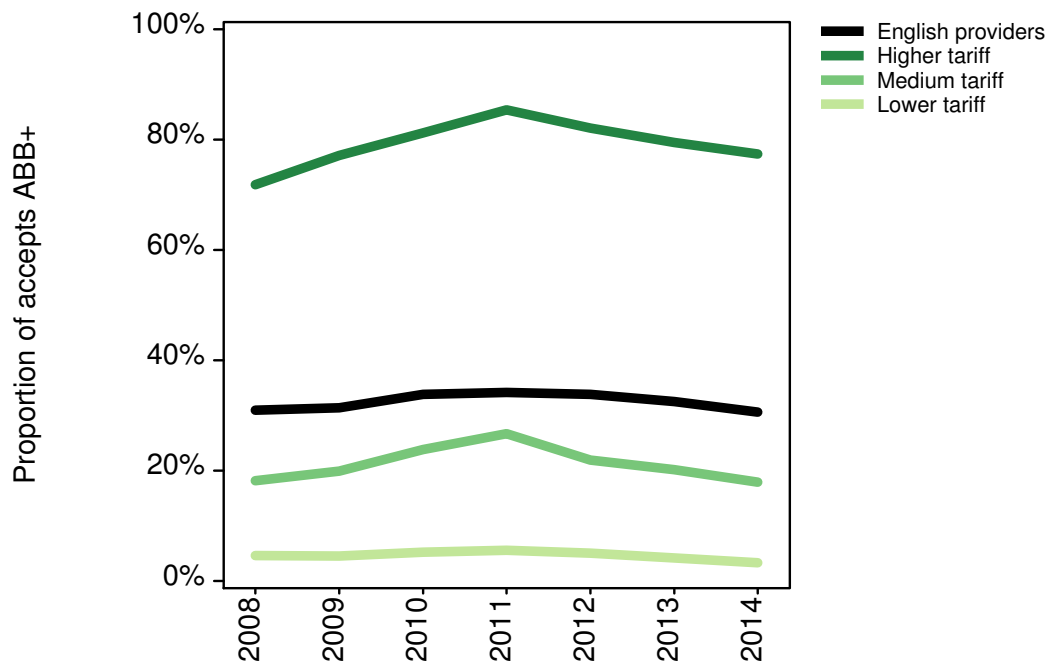
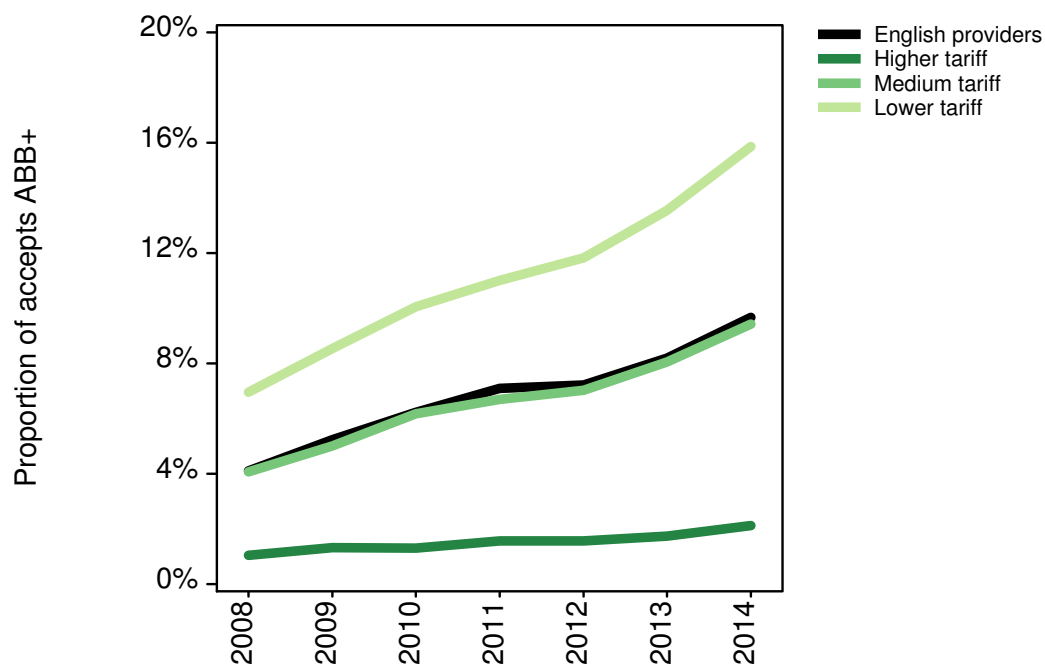


Figure 69 Proportion of English 18 year old acceptances who are holding BTEC ABB+ qualifications by provider tariff group



Acceptances rates to provider groups similar for most grade profiles between 2014 and 2013

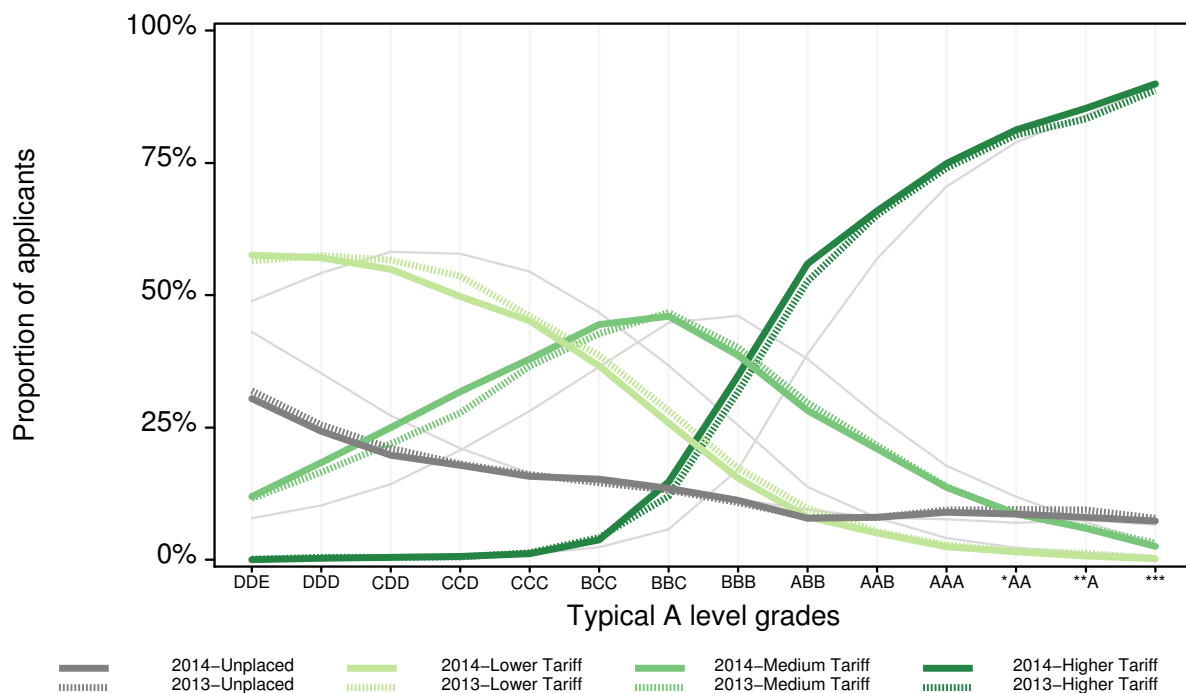
Figure 70 covers English 18 year old applicants in the 2014 and 2013 cycles with three A levels who were either accepted to English providers, or made a main scheme application to an English provider but were unplaced (in total, around 150,000 per cycle). The applicants are grouped by the number of A 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 that were accepted to higher, medium or lower tariff providers (or left unplaced) is shown. 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 high 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 the different provider groups is similar between 2014 and 2013. This is in contrast to the change in the acceptance rates between both of these cycles and 2011.

For example, of those applicants with a typical grade profile of BBB in 2014; 35 per cent entered a higher tariff provider, 39 per cent a medium tariff provider and 15 per cent a lower tariff provider. In 2013 these proportions were similar (32 per cent higher, 40 per cent medium, 17 per cent lower. In 2011 the proportion entering higher tariff providers was lower (17 per cent) and the proportion entering medium tariff (46 per cent) and lower tariff (25 per cent) providers were higher.

Figure 70 Acceptance rates of English 18 year old applicants to higher, medium and lower English providers, by number of A level grades (2011 shown as thinner grey lines)



Entry rates by background

Disadvantaged 18 year olds more likely than ever to enter higher education across the UK

Figure 71 shows the proportion of the 18 year old population living in the most disadvantaged areas that were accepted for entry, by country of domicile. The entry rates for Scotland will be lower than the total entry to high education since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS.

In 2014, the entry rate for all countries increased: England +1.7 percentage points to 18.2 per cent, Northern Ireland +1.7 percentage points to 17.4 per cent, Scotland +1.1 percentage points to 9.5 per cent and Wales +3.0 percentage points to 16.7 per cent.

These changes equate to disadvantaged 18 year olds from England becoming 11 per cent more likely to enter higher education in 2014 compared to 2013, 11 per cent more likely to enter from Northern Ireland, 14 per cent more likely to enter from Scotland and 22 per cent more likely from Wales. These increases were a continuation of a general increasing trend across the period.

For England, Northern Ireland and Wales the increases in 2014 are the largest recorded in the period, both proportionally and in percentage points.

Entry rates for disadvantaged increase by a third in five years in England and Wales

In all countries, the entry rate for 18 year olds from the most disadvantaged areas increased over the period. Compared with entry rates five years ago, in 2009, 18 year olds from these disadvantaged areas were around 34 per cent (England and Wales), 28 per cent (Northern Ireland) and 36 per cent (Scotland) more likely to be accepted for entry in 2014.

Disadvantaged young people in England have become more likely to enter higher education in every cycle in the period. They are now over 60 per cent more likely to enter in 2014 than they were in 2006.

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

Figure 72 shows the entry rate of 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas, by country. The entry rates for Scotland will be lower than the total entry to high education since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS. These entry rates are generally three to four times higher than for the most disadvantaged group, but have not shown the same degree of change over the period. The entry rates in 2014 were at similar levels to those seen across the period, and less than 10 per cent (proportionally) from where they were in 2004.

Between the 2013 and 2014 cycles, the entry rate for the 18 year olds living in advantaged areas increased in England (+0.8 percentage points, 1.9 per cent proportionally) and slightly in Wales (+0.2 percentage points, +0.6 per cent proportionally) and decreased in Scotland (-0.9 percentage points, -2.6 per cent proportionally) and in Northern Ireland (-2.4 percentage points, -5.1 per cent proportionally).

Figure 71 18 year old entry rates for disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) by country of domicile

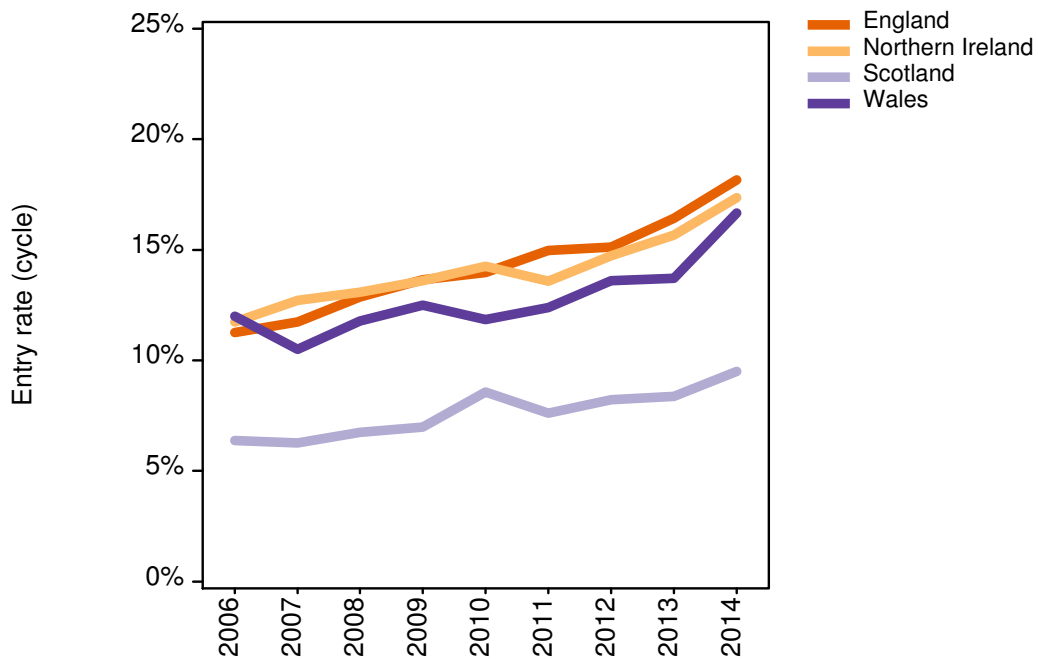
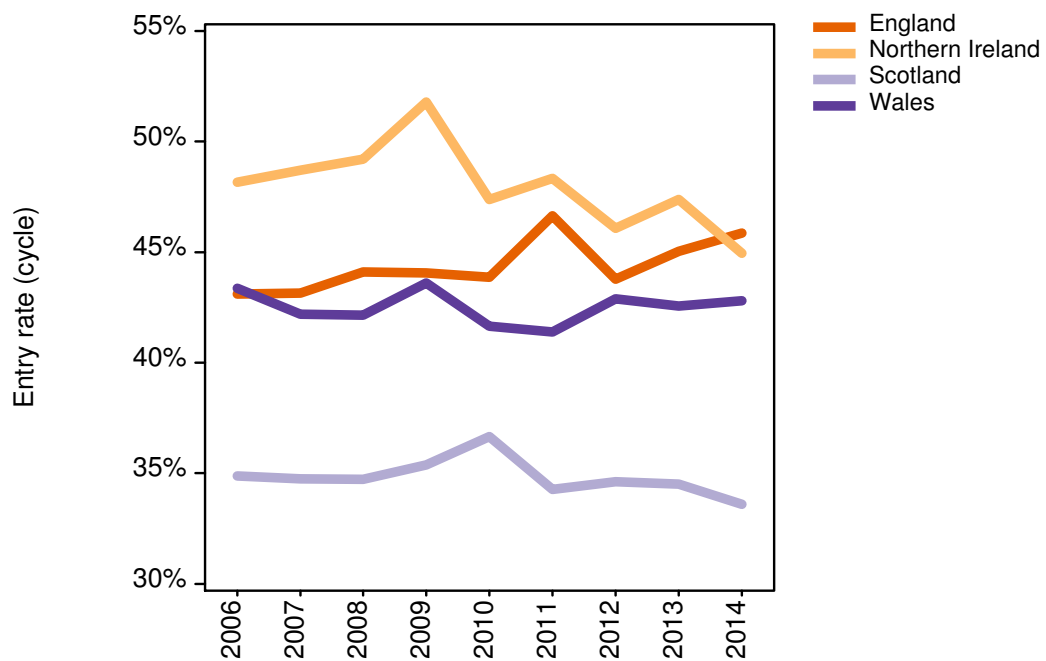


Figure 72 18 year old entry rates for advantaged areas (POLAR2 Q5) by country of domicile



Entry differences by background reducing in each country of the UK

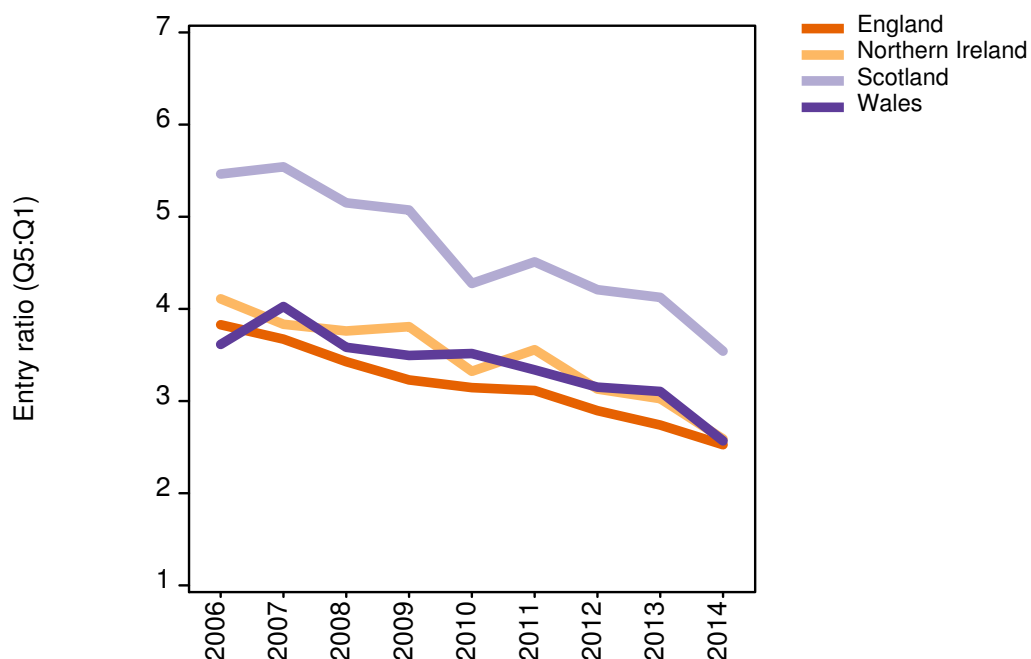
Figure 73 shows, for each country of the UK, relative differences in the entry rates of 18 year olds, by background. It shows the entry rate ratio, quantifying how much more likely those in the most advantaged areas were to enter higher education than those in the most disadvantaged areas. That is, the 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 (by that multiple, for example 2.5 means the advantaged group are 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 2014.

In 2014, differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged decreased in all four countries, with the entry rate ratios reaching new lows: England (2.5), Northern Ireland (2.6), Scotland (3.5) and Wales (2.6). In 2006 the entry rate ratios were: England (3.8), Northern Ireland (4.1), Scotland (5.5) and Wales (3.6).

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

Figure 73 18 year old entry rate ratios: most advantaged areas (POLAR2 Q5) relative to most disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) by country of domicile



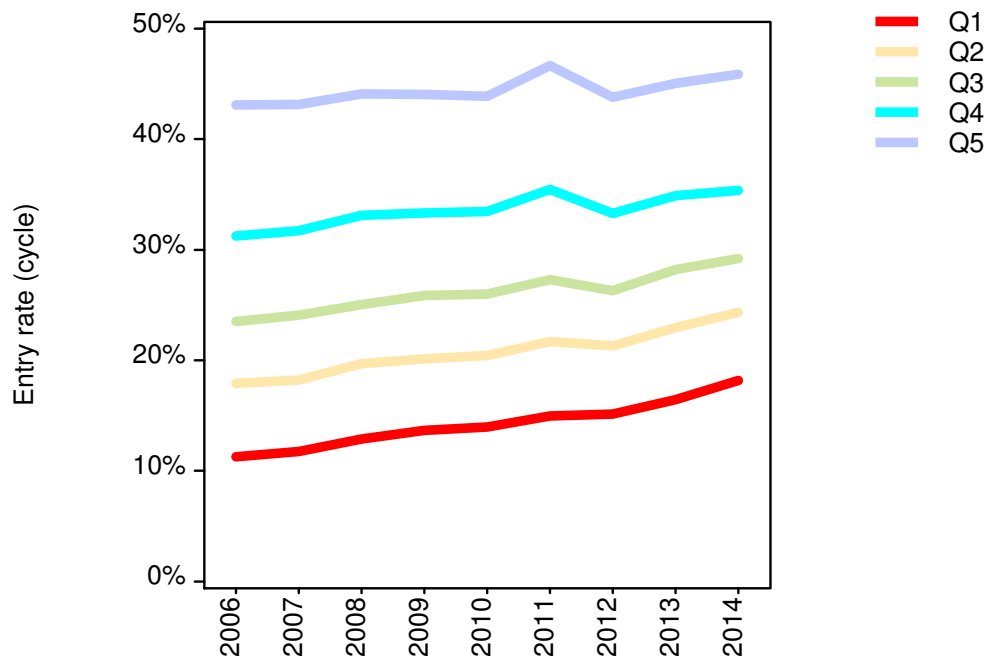
Entry rates for English 18 year olds from all backgrounds increased in 2014

Figure 74 shows the entry rates for English 18 year olds by area-based background. There is a progression from lower to higher entry rates across the disadvantaged to advantaged groups that was maintained throughout the period. The entry rates for all groups increased across the period.

In the 2014 cycle, entry rates increased from 2013 in each of the groups, with the increases showing a progression from a small increase for the advantaged groups (1.5 per cent proportionally in quintile 4 and 1.9 per cent proportionally in quintile 5) to the largest increases for the disadvantaged groups (6.1 per cent for quintile 2 and 10.5 per cent). For the most disadvantaged group the increase was the largest recorded, for other groups the increase was smaller than in 2013.

The 2014 entry rate was the highest recorded for all groups except the most advantaged. The entry rates in 2014 were 18.2 per cent in quintile 1, 24.3 per cent in quintile 2, 29.2 per cent in quintile 3, 35.4 per cent in quintile 4 and 45.9 per cent in quintile 5.

Figure 74 18 year olds in England, entry rates by POLAR2 (Q5=advantaged) groups



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

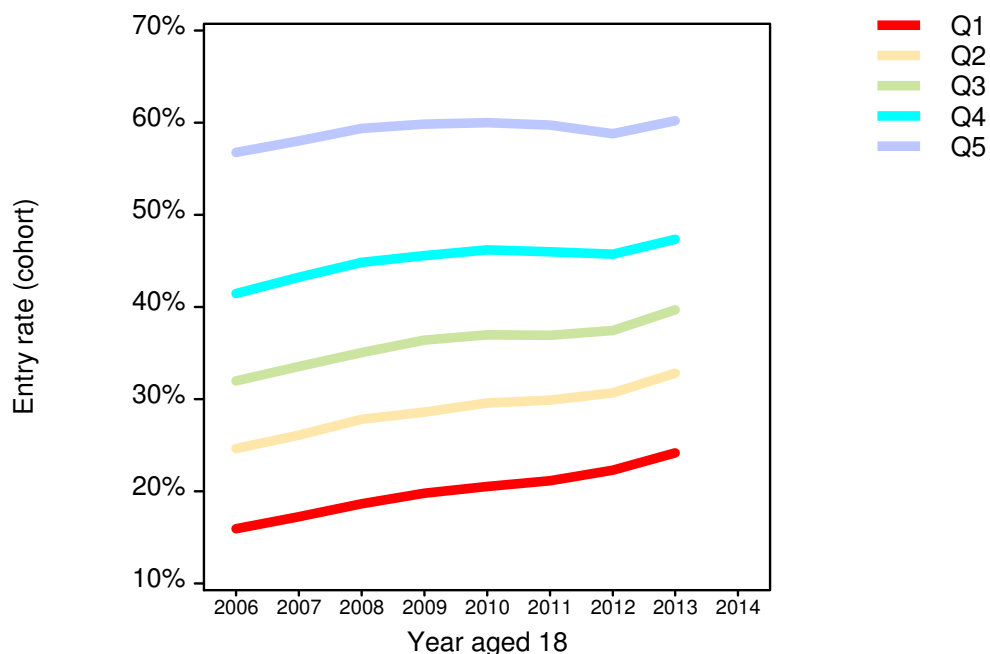
Figure 75 reports cohort entry rates for English young people by area-based background. This measure combines the proportion of the population accepted for entry at age 18 with the proportion of the same population accepted for entry at age 19, a year later. As such, it gives a representation of the 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, as happened with recent changes in deferred entry and acceptance rates for 18 year olds (which deplete the cohort of potential acceptances at 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 2013 living in the most disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) 24.2 per cent were accepted for entry aged either 18 in 2013 or 19 in 2014. This is an increase of 1.9 percentage points (8.3 per cent proportionally) on the previous cohort (2012) and the highest value recorded. The increases for quintiles 1, 2 and 3 are the largest recorded in the period.

The cohort rate for those living in the most disadvantaged areas has increased by between 1 and 2 percentage points each year, resulting in the entry rate for the 2013 cohort being 8.2 percentage points (50 per cent proportionally) higher than the 2006 cohort.

For 18 year olds in 2013 living in the most advantaged areas, 60.2 per cent were accepted for entry aged either 18 in 2013 or 19 in 2014.

Figure 75 Young cohort entry rates (aged 18 or 19 on entry) by background (POLAR2 Q5=advantaged) for England



Entry rates to higher tariff providers increase for third year

Figure 76 shows the proportion of 18 year olds living in disadvantaged areas across the UK who were accepted for entry into a higher tariff provider. These entry rates were relatively low, typically between 1 and 3 per cent of the age group and, for the smaller countries, show a high degree of cycle-to-cycle proportional variation (reflecting the small population and acceptance base and the geographical distribution of higher tariff providers).

The entry rate to higher tariff providers for disadvantaged 18 year olds has increased for England, Scotland and Wales in every cycle since 2011 and, for each of these countries, takes the entry rate in 2014 to the highest recorded level. For each of these countries the entry rate increased by over 10 per cent proportionally in 2014.

In Northern Ireland the entry rate in 2014 decreased by 0.3 percentage points to 1.1 per cent.

Disadvantaged in England 40 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff than three years ago

Young people in the most disadvantaged areas in England became 13 per cent more likely to enter a higher tariff institution in 2014. The proportional increase from other less advantaged areas through to the most advantaged areas is much lower at between one and three per cent.

Young people from the most disadvantaged areas in 2014 were around 40 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff institutions than three years ago. This is the greatest proportional increases for any background. The relatively low entry rate for the most disadvantaged group means that these large proportional increases in entry rates translate to a less than a single percentage point increase in the rate over this period (from 2.3 per cent to 3.2 per cent) compared to over two percentage points for the most advantaged group.

Record entry rates to higher tariff providers from advantaged areas in England and Wales

Entry rates to higher tariff providers for 18 year olds in advantaged areas are typically between six to nine times greater than in disadvantaged areas, larger differences than for entry to all providers.

Across the 2006 to 2011 cycles, the entry rates were relatively constant in England and Northern Ireland but decreased in Scotland and Wales. For 18 year olds in advantaged areas in England, the entry rate to higher tariff providers increased in each cycle since 2011 to reach 21.3 per cent in 2014.

In Wales, the rate in 2014 was 17.4 per cent in 2014, higher than in any other cycle across the period. In Scotland, the rate remained broadly similar to 2013 at 21.4 per cent. The entry rate to higher tariff providers from the most advantaged areas in Northern Ireland decreased by 0.3 percentage points in 2014 to 8.0 per cent, the lower than any other cycle across the period.

Figure 76 18 year olds entry rates to higher tariff providers for disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) by country of domicile

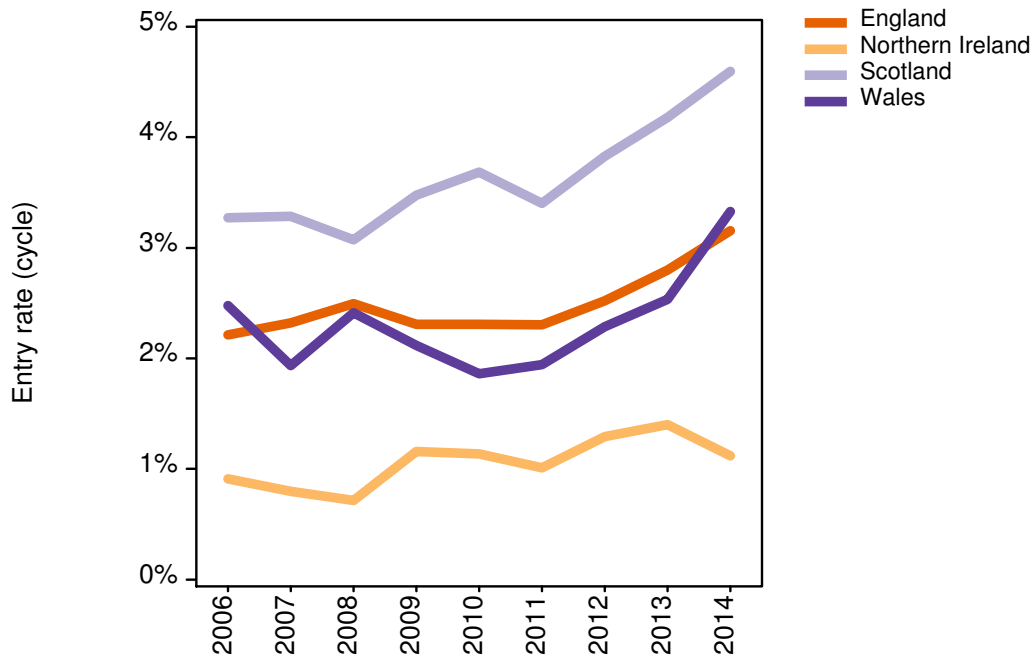
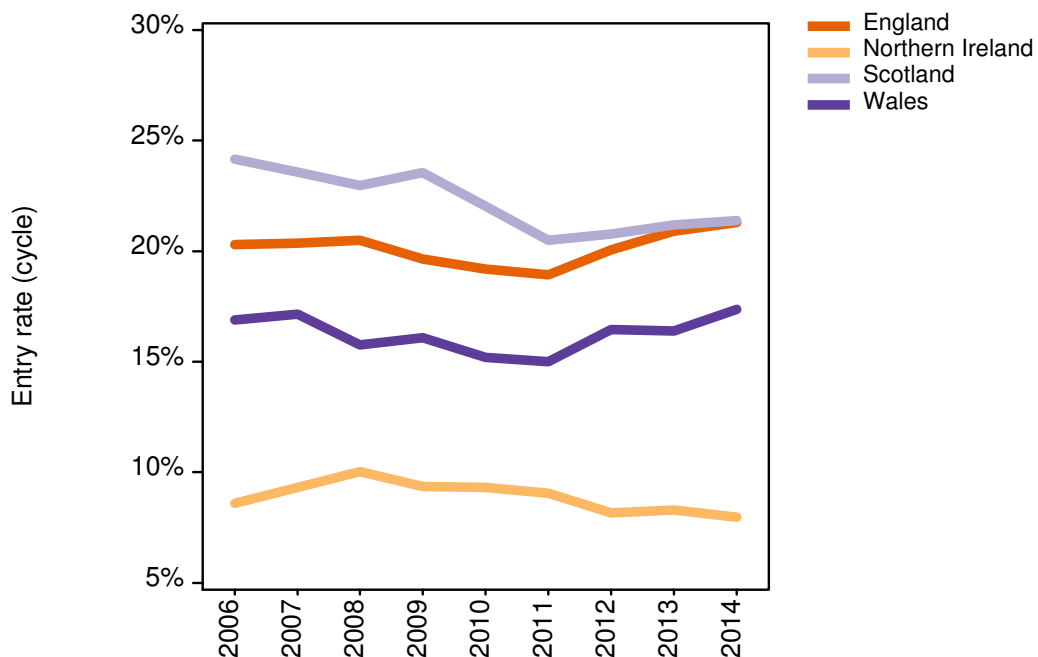


Figure 77 18 year olds entry rates to higher tariff providers for advantaged areas (POLAR2 Q5) by country of domicile



Proportional differences in entry rates by background to higher tariff provider fall in 2014

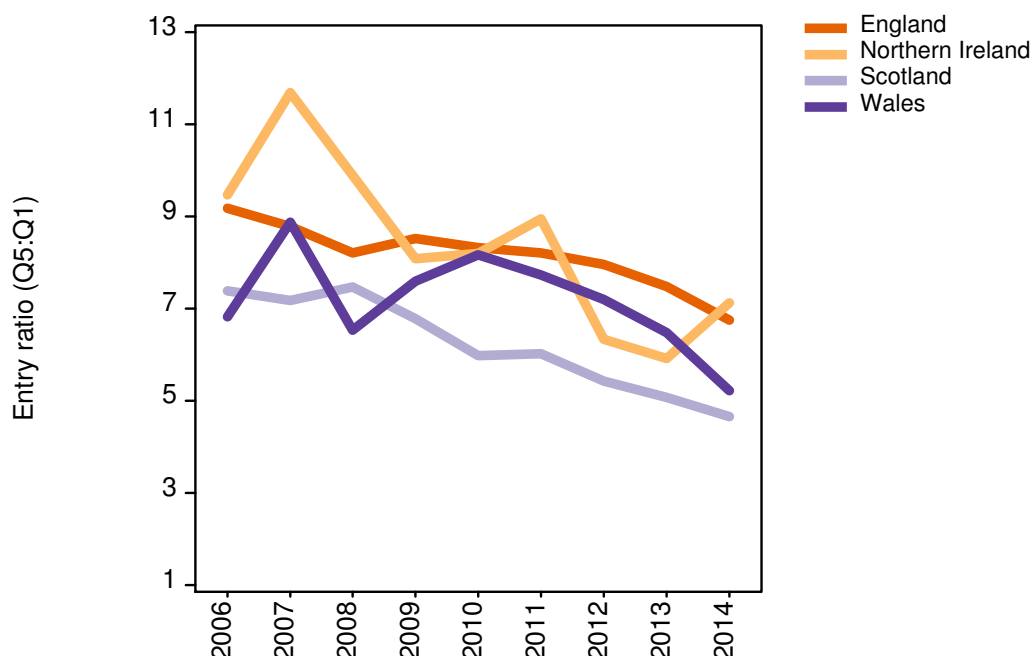
Figure 78 shows the ratios of the entry rates to higher tariff providers from the most advantaged areas to the entry rates to higher tariff providers for the most disadvantaged areas within each country. That is, how much more likely the 18 year olds in the most advantaged areas were to enter these providers than those living in the most disadvantaged areas.

Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales show a high degree of cycle-to-cycle variation in entry rates (reflecting the small population and acceptance base), giving variable entry rate ratios. In each of these three countries, despite the cycle-to-cycle variation, the trend across the period has been for these entry ratios to reduce. There remains a much greater proportion of 18 year olds in the most advantaged areas entering higher tariff providers, compared to 18 year olds in the most disadvantaged areas. In 2014, the entry ratio was around 7 in Northern Ireland, 4.5 in Scotland (where not all higher education is recorded through UCAS) and 5 in Wales.

In England, the entry ratio in 2006 was 9.2, therefore 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas were more than 9 times as likely to enter higher tariff providers compared to those from the most disadvantaged areas. Across the period this ratio reduced in every cycle (apart from 2009) so that in 2014, English 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas were 6.8 times more likely to enter higher tariff providers compared to the most disadvantaged areas.

In England, Scotland and Wales, the relative difference in entering higher tariff providers between advantaged and disadvantaged groups reached a new low in 2014. The reduction in the entry rate ratio between 2013 and 2014 was one of the larger decreases across the period for these countries.

Figure 78 18 year old entry rate ratios (higher tariff providers): most advantaged areas (POLAR2 Q5) to most disadvantaged areas by country of domicile



Entry rates to all types of provider increase in 2014 for disadvantaged English 18 year olds

Figures 79 to 81 show the English 18 year old entry rates to each of the three provider tariff groups by area-based background (POLAR2). 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 in the lower tariff providers. The range in entry rates between the most disadvantaged and the most advantaged in 2014 is 3 per cent to 21 per cent for entry to higher tariff providers and 5 per cent to 13 per cent for medium tariff providers. For lower tariff providers entry rates from all backgrounds are in a narrow range of 10 to 12 per cent.

Entry rates to higher tariff providers by background span wide range

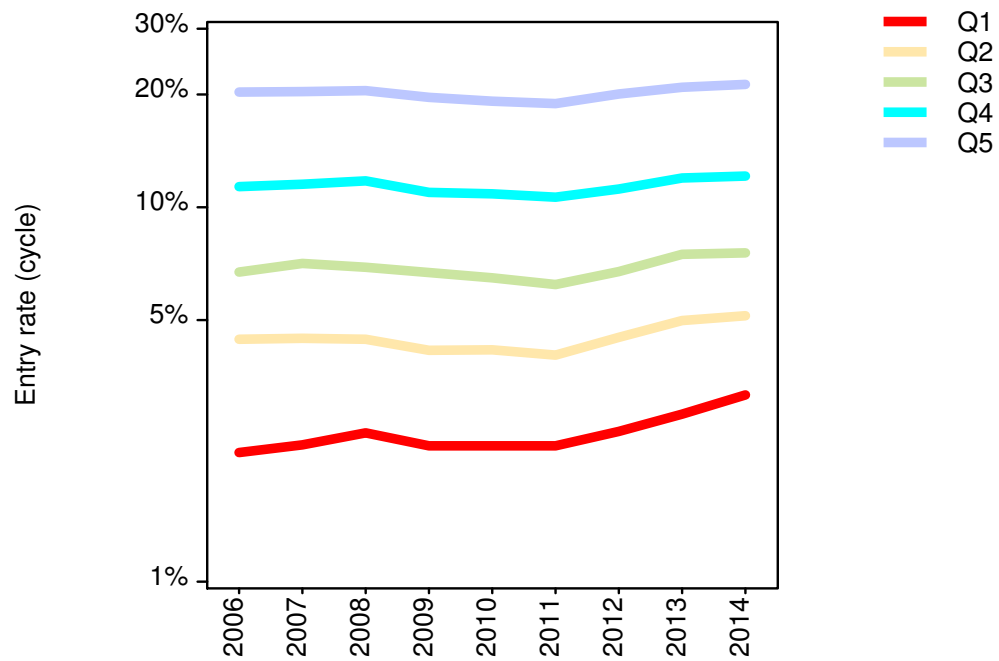
Figure 79 shows entry rates to higher tariff providers by background for the 18 year old population in England against a logarithmic axis (so that the proportional changes are clearer). There is a marked progression from lower to higher entry rates across the disadvantaged to advantaged groups that is maintained throughout the period. This is characterised by each quintile group being between 50 and 100 per cent more likely to be accepted to higher tariff providers than the preceding (more disadvantaged) quintile group.

In 2014, the entry rate to higher tariff providers increased for 18 year olds from each of these groups. The largest proportional increase was in the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas (13 per cent), much larger than the proportional increase from any other group. The next largest proportional increase (3 per cent) was for the next most disadvantaged group (quintile 2).

This larger proportional increase in the entry rate for quintile 1 is relative to a very low entry rate, meaning that the percentage point changes are small. For the most disadvantaged group the entry rate in 2014 is 3.2 per cent, an increase of only 0.4 percentage points compared with 2013. In contrast, the very low proportional increases in the more advantaged areas are relative to much higher entry rates. So that in the most advantaged areas 21.3 per cent of 18 year olds were accepted to higher tariff providers in 2014, a proportional increase of only 2 per cent, based on a percentage point difference of 0.4 percentage points – exactly the same percentage point difference as in the most disadvantaged areas.

Since 2011, entry rates have increased from 2.3 per cent to 3.2 per cent for the most disadvantaged (39 per cent proportionally, 0.9 percentage points). For the most advantaged group the increase has been from 18.9 per cent to 21.3 per cent (2.4 percentage points, 13 per cent proportionally).

Figure 79 English 18 year olds, entry rates to higher tariff providers by POLAR2 groups (logarithmic scale)

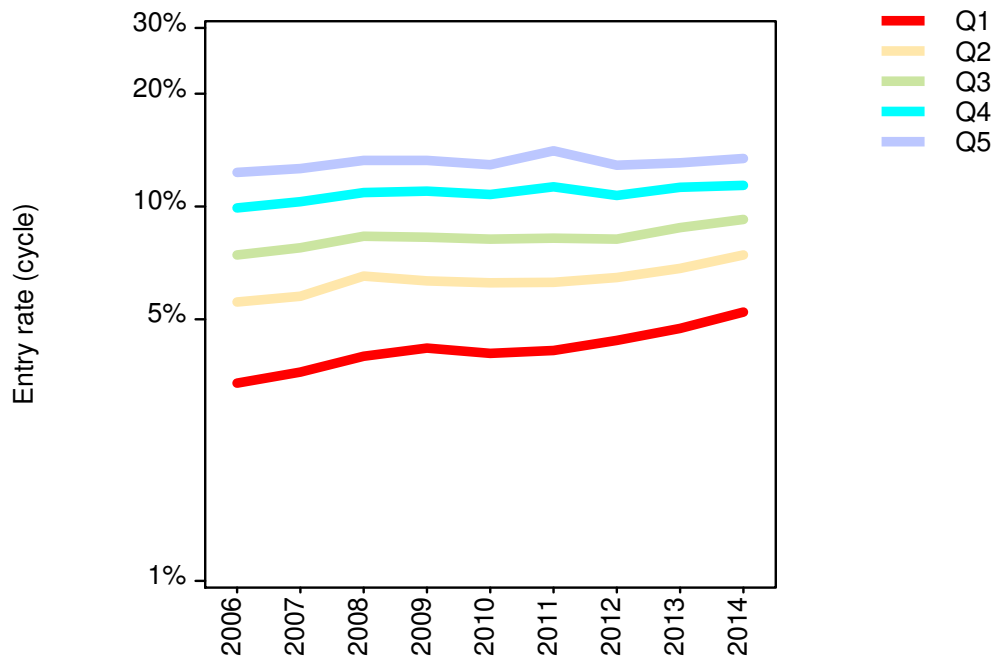


Entry rates to medium tariff providers increased from all backgrounds in 2014

Entry rates to medium tariff providers (Figure 80) have generally increased across the period in all areas, but there were greater increases in entry rates from the more disadvantaged areas. The difference and progression in entry rates between the groups are evident for these providers, but have declined over the period. In 2014, English 18 year olds living in the most advantaged areas were 2.6 times more likely to enter medium tariff providers than those from the most disadvantaged areas.

The entry rate to medium tariff providers for 18 year olds from the most advantaged areas was 13.4 per cent in 2014, 8.2 percentage points higher than the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas (5.2 per cent). The difference in entry rates between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged areas was 8.9 percentage points in 2006.

Figure 80 English 18 year olds, entry rates to medium tariff providers by POLAR2 groups (logarithmic scale)



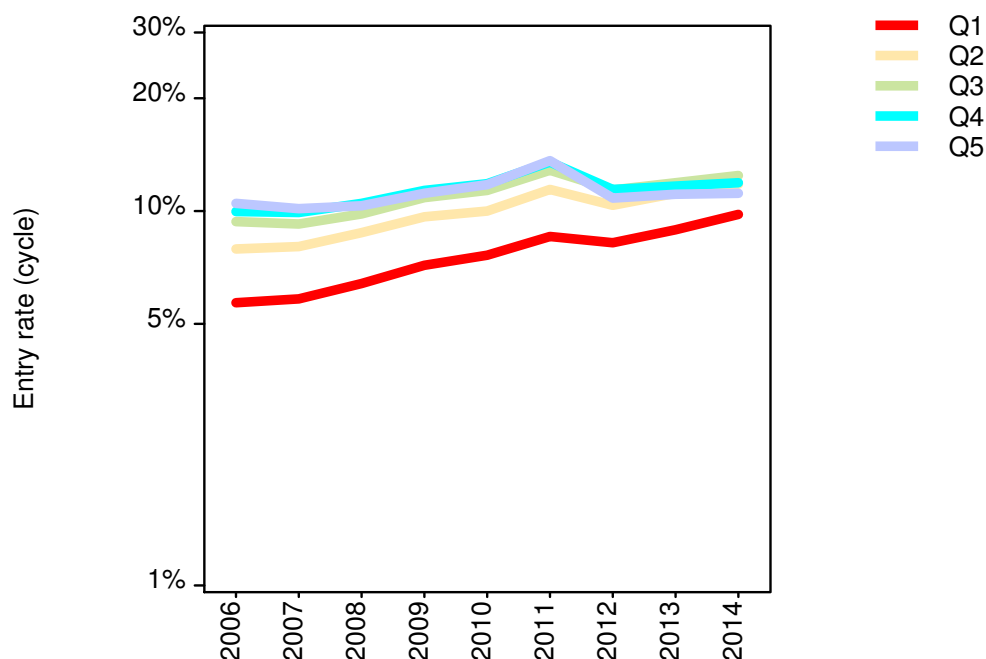
Small and reducing differences in entry rates to lower tariff providers by background

For entry to lower tariff providers (Figure 81), there is much less differentiation in entry rates by background and in 2014, the entry rates from all backgrounds were within a 2.6 percentage point range, the closest recorded (in 2006, the range was 4.8 percentage points).

In 2006, the entry rate to lower tariff providers from the most advantaged areas was 1.8 times the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas. By the end of the period, in 2014, the entry rate from the most advantaged areas was 1.1 times the entry rate from the most disadvantaged areas. In 2006, there was a clear progression from lower to higher entry rates across the most disadvantaged (quintile 1) to the most advantaged (quintile 5) group.

In 2014, the entry rates for quintile 2, quintile 3, quintile 4 and quintile 5 were all around 12 per cent. It is only in the most disadvantaged areas (quintile 1) that the entry rate was lower, at 9.8 per cent. The entry rate for this group increased by 10 per cent proportionally in 2014, the largest proportional increase by background.

Figure 81 English 18 year olds, entry rates to lower tariff providers by POLAR2 groups (logarithmic scale)



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, 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.

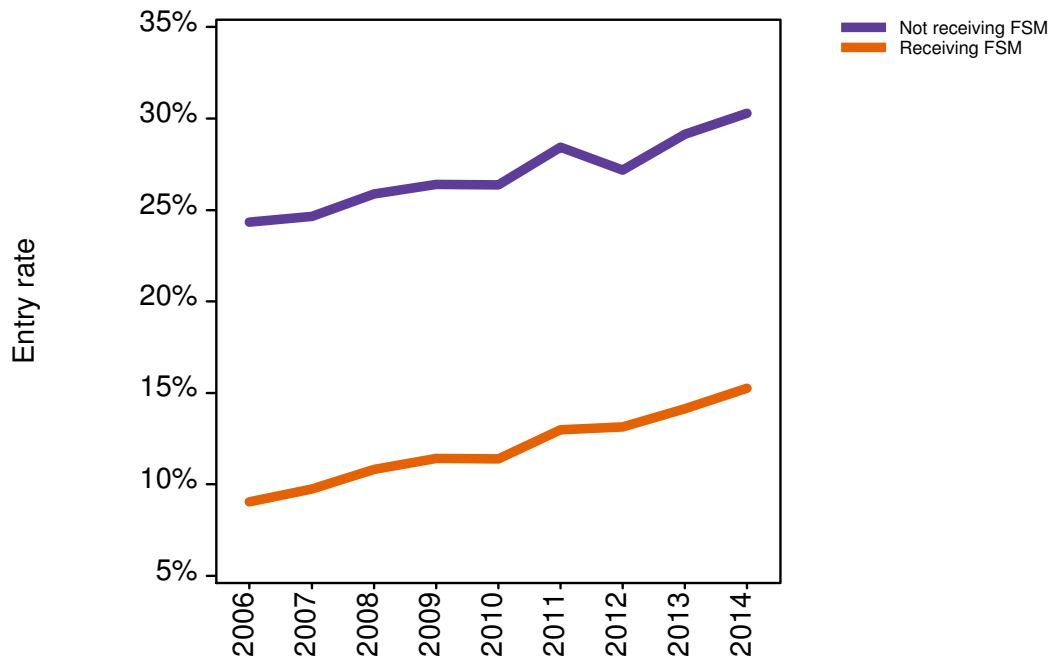
An improvement to the linking process has increased the number of links by around 19,000 in each cycle, meaning that reported entry rates are higher (typically by around three percentage points) than the equivalent rates reported last year. This increase in rates also reduces the size of many of the proportional differences between the different FSM and ethnic groups.

Entry rates for both FSM and non-FSM pupils increased in 2014 to highest recorded values

Between 12 and 14 per cent of the state school 15 year old population were in receipt of free school meals (FSM) over the period. The entry rate for young people who received FSM aged 15 was 15.3 per cent in 2014, which compares to 30.3 per cent for the non-FSM group. This was a percentage point difference compared to 2013 of just over 1 percentage point for both groups, resulting in a proportional increase in entry rate of 8 per cent for FSM and 4 per cent for non-FSM pupils.

The entry rate for FSM pupils increased proportionally by nearly 70 per cent, compared to a proportional increase of 25 per cent for the non-FSM entry rate over the same period. The percentage point difference between the FSM and non-FSM group remains at around 15 percentage points, almost unchanged across the same period.

Figure 82 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by free school meal (FSM) status at age 15

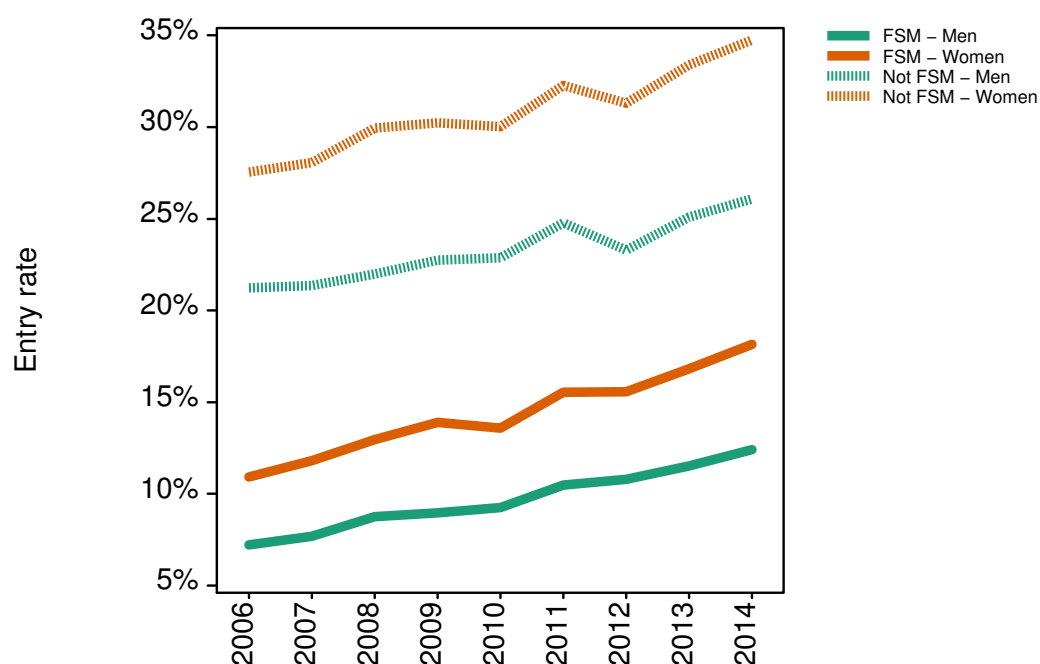


Entry rates 46 per cent higher for women than men amongst free school meal (FSM) pupils

Young women have higher entry rates than men within both the FSM and non-FSM populations. In 2014, the entry rate for the non-FSM group was 34.8 per cent for women, higher (33 per cent proportionally) than the entry rate for men (26.1 per cent). In the FSM group, the entry rate for women was 18.2 per cent in 2014, 46 per cent higher (proportionally) than the entry rate for men (12.4 per cent). These proportional differences between entry rates for men and women between the groups vary from year to year, but have not been either increasing or decreasing steadily across the period. For the non-FSM group women have been between 30 and 34 per cent more likely to enter higher education, and for the FSM group women have been between 44 and 55 per cent more likely to enter.

For both the FSM and non-FSM groups, the percentage point difference in entry rates between women and men has increased over the period. For the non-FSM group entry rate for women is 8.7 percentage points higher than the entry rate for men in 2014, compared with a difference in entry rates of 6.3 percentage points in 2006. The difference in entry rates for men and women in the FSM group is smaller (5.7 percentage points) than for the non-FSM group, but this is relative to a much lower entry rate. This difference has increased from 3.7 percentage points in 2006.

Figure 83 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by free school meal (FSM) status at age 15 and sex

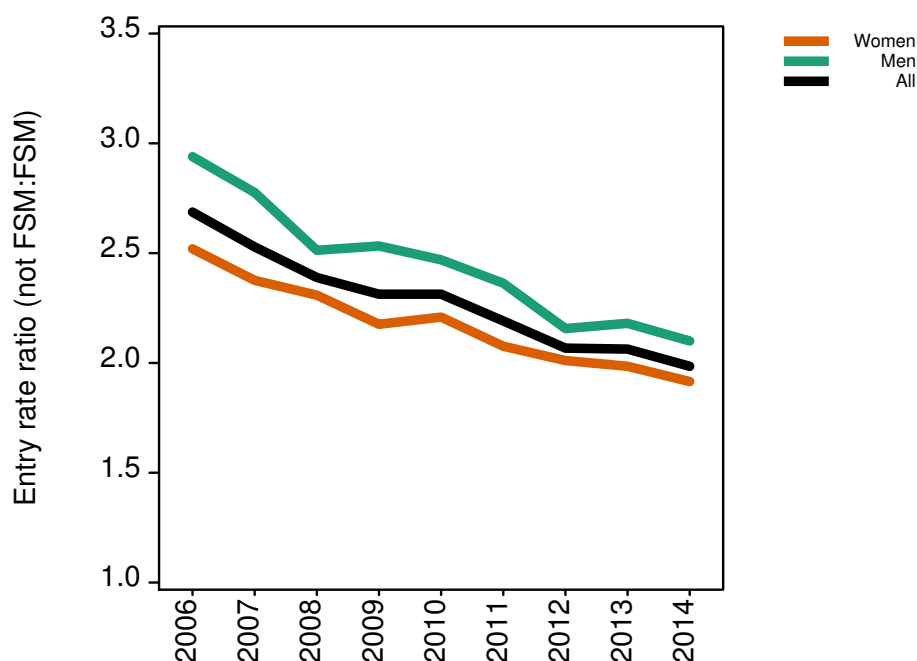


Non-FSM pupils twice as likely to enter as FSM, reduces in 2014 to lowest difference recorded

The ratio of entry rates between non-FSM and FSM pupils declined over the period from 2.7 in 2006 to 2.0 in 2014. This decline was a result of the entry rate for FSM pupils increasing (proportionally) by nearly 70 per cent, whilst the proportional increase over the same period for Non-FSM pupils was just 25 per cent. Despite this decline the entry rate for non-FSM pupils was still twice that of FSM pupils.

The ratio of non-FSM to FSM entry rates was higher for men (2.1) than women (1.9) but both sexes show a similar trend of declining differences over time.

Figure 84 Entry rate ratios (formerly not FSM: FSM) for English 18 year olds from state English schools



FSM pupil entry rates to low tariff providers increased by 73 per cent since 2006

For young English people in 2014 who were formerly in English state schools and not in receipt of free school meals (non-FSM), 11.9 per cent entered lower tariff providers, 9.7 per cent entered medium tariff providers and 8.6 per cent entered higher tariff providers. Non-FSM entry rates increased in 2014 to all provider groups, and for higher and medium tariff providers they were the highest levels recorded.

Entry rates to all types of provider are lower for those who formerly received FSM. The entry rate to lower tariff providers (9.2 per cent) was much higher than to medium (3.9 per cent) and higher tariff (2.1 per cent) providers. Entry to a lower tariff provider was over four and a half times more likely for this group than entry to a higher tariff provider.

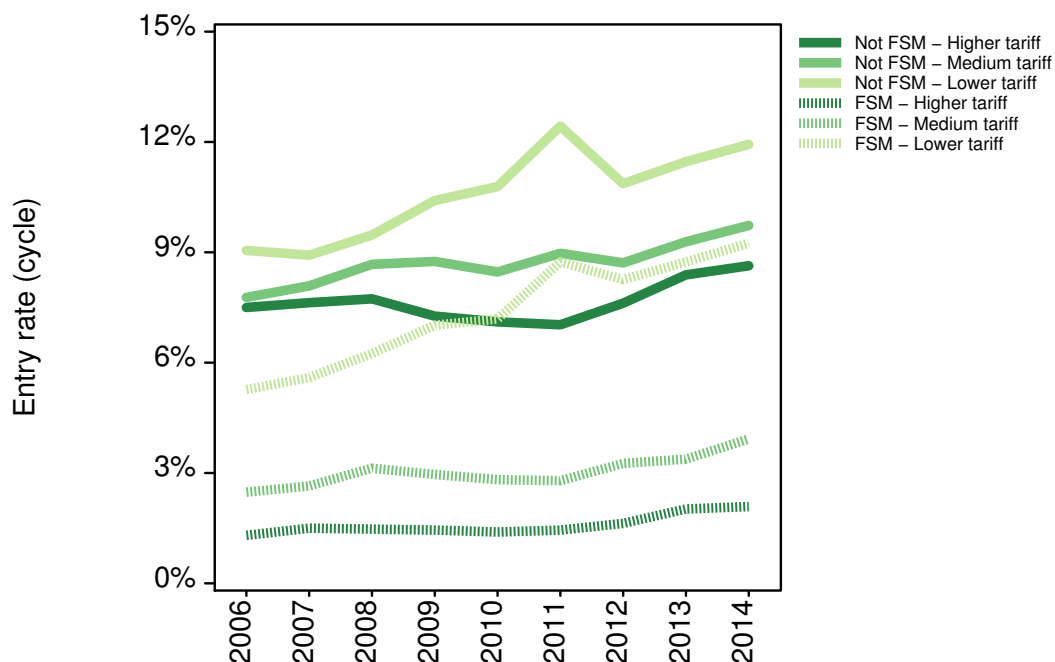
In 2014, the entry rate of non-FSM pupils to higher tariff providers was 4.1 times larger than that of FSM pupils, the equivalent ratios for medium and lower tariff providers were 2.5 and 1.3 respectively.

Entry rates to all types of provider for the FSM group increased in 2014 to the highest recorded values. The entry rate to lower tariff providers has increased by 75 per cent since 2006 (+4.0 percentage points).

For entry to higher tariff providers, entry rates increased by 3.7 per cent proportionally for the FSM group and 2.9 per cent proportionally for those in the non-FSM group. The entry rate of FSM pupils to higher tariff providers has increased by around 50 per cent proportionally between 2011 and 2014, around twice the proportional increase of non-FSM pupils.

The difference in entry rates to higher tariff providers for the two groups is 6.5 percentage points, higher than the 5.6 percentage points in 2011, and similar to 2006 (6.2 percentage points).

Figure 85 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by free school meal (FSM) status at age 15 and provider tariff group



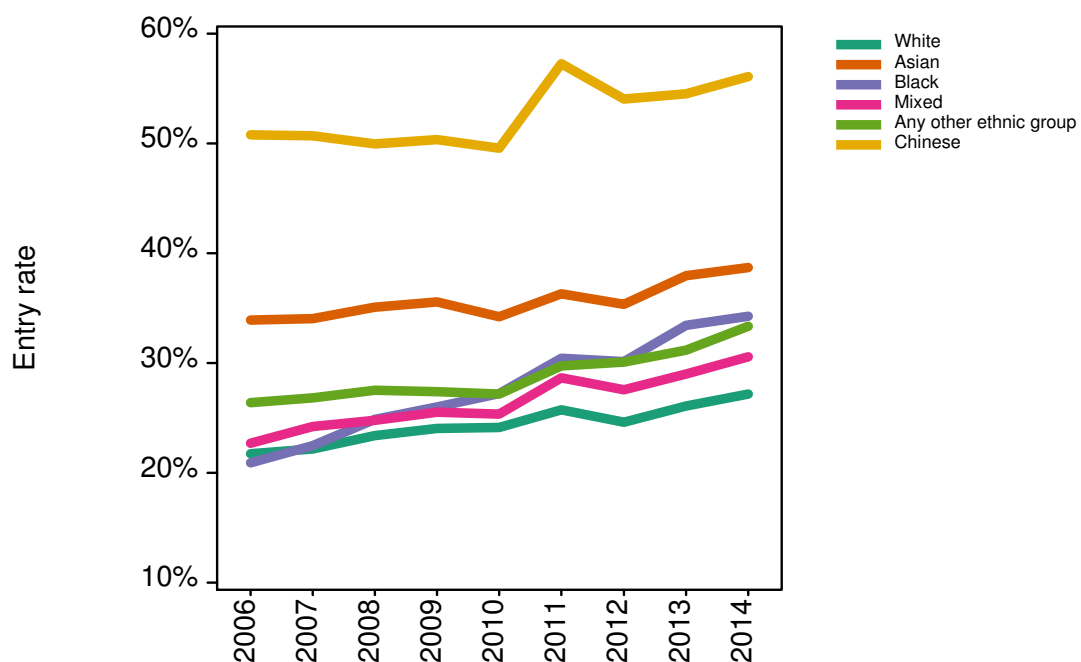
Large differences in entry rates by ethnic group for English pupils

The entry rates for 18 year olds who were formerly in English state schools varied by the ethnic group recorded in the pupil data sets. Former pupils recorded as being in the Chinese ethnic group have the highest entry rate (56 per cent in 2014) and those recorded in the White ethnic group had the lowest (27 per cent in 2014).

The entry rates for all ethnic groups increased in 2014, reaching the highest recorded values for each group except the Chinese ethnic group (where entry rates in 2011 were higher). For the White ethnic group the entry rate was 27.2 per cent (+ 1.1 percentage points), for the Asian ethnic group 38.7 per cent (+0.8 percentage points), for the Black ethnic group 34.3 per cent (+ 0.9 percentage points), for the Mixed ethnic group 30.6 per cent (+1.6 percentage points), for the Chinese ethnic group 56.1 per cent (+1.6 percentage points), and for the Any other ethnic group 33.4 per cent (+2.2 percentage points).

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 34.3 per cent in 2014, a proportional increase of 64 per cent.

Figure 86 Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by Ethnic group



Application and entry rates by sex

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

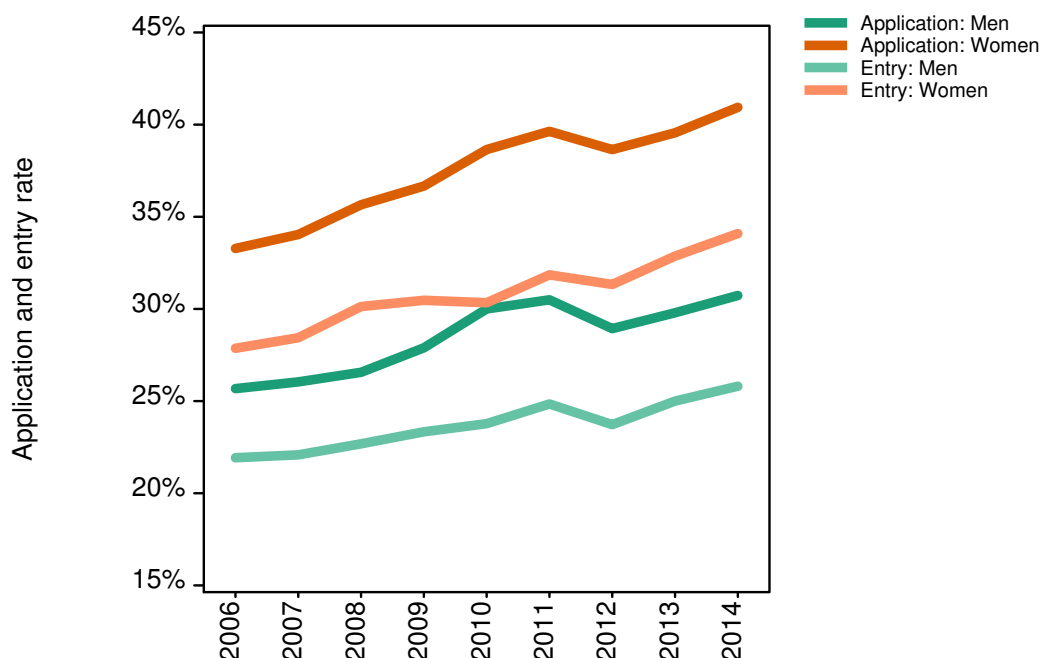
In 2014, around 36 per cent of the UK 18 year old population applied to higher education through UCAS and around 30 per cent were accepted for entry. These national rates were a mixture of different rates for men and women. Figure 87 shows the application rates and entry rates for UK domiciled 18 year 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 2014 (30.7 per cent) remained below the level for women nine years previously in 2006 (33.3 per cent). For both men and women, the application rate increased (3.1 per cent proportionally for men, 3.5 per cent for women) in 2014. In 2014, as in most of the more recent cycles, 18 year old women were around a third more likely to apply than 18 year old men but the percentage point difference widened in 2014.

The entry rate for women was considerably higher than the entry rate for men across the whole period. For 18 year olds in 2014 the entry rate increased (3.2 per cent proportionally for men, 3.7 per cent for women) to the highest recorded levels for both men (25.8 per cent) and women (34.1 per cent). As with application rates, 18 year old women were around a third (32 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 half a percentage point in 2014 to 8.2 percentage points – the largest difference recorded. This difference in 18 year old entry rates between men and women equates to 32,000 fewer 18 year old men entering higher education this year than would be the case if men had the same entry rate as women.

Figure 87 UK domiciled 18 year olds, application and entry rates by sex



By age 19, 44 per cent of women have entered, over 9 percentage points higher than men

Cohort application rates and cohort entry rates for UK domiciled young men and women are shown in Figure 88. 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 disadvantage that they cannot yet be reported for the cohort that was aged 18 in 2014, since they have not yet had the opportunity to apply at age 19.

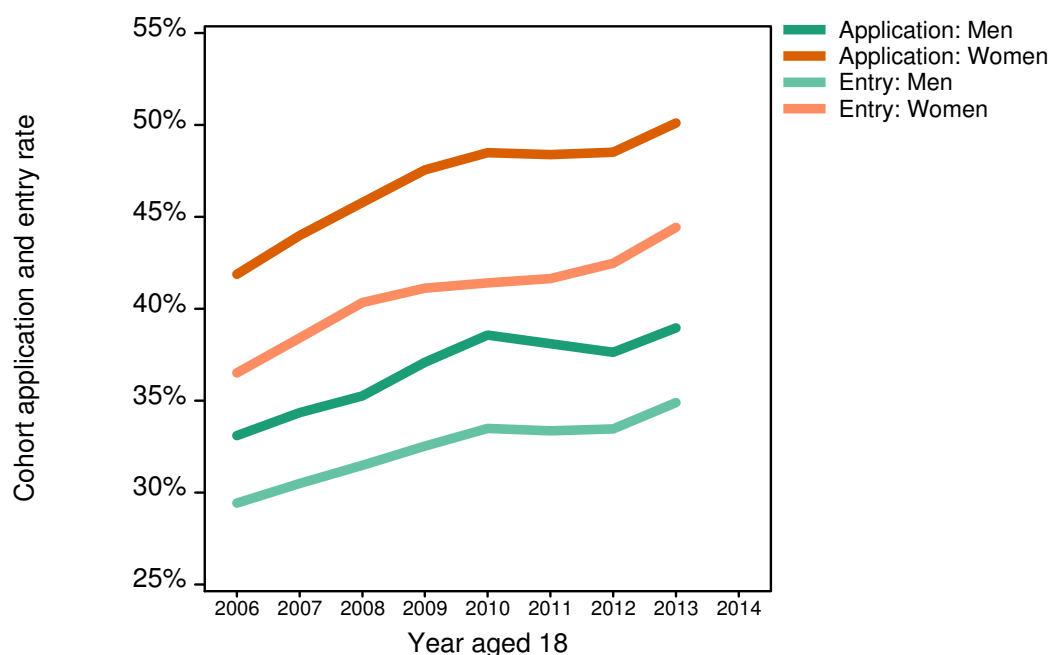
The cohort that were 18 in 2013 were around 20 per cent more likely to apply or be accepted to enter higher education than the cohort that were 18 in 2006. This is the case for both men and women.

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 those that were 18 in 2013, women were 29 per cent more likely to apply for higher education by age 19 than men, and 27 per cent more likely to be accepted to enter higher education by age 19.

For the 2013 cohort (those who were 18 in 2013 and 19 in 2014) the cohort entry rate for women was 44.4 per cent, over 9 percentage points higher than for men (34.9 per cent). The cohort entry rate for women (44.4 per cent) was higher by 5.4 percentage points than the cohort application rate (38.9 per cent) for men. The cohort application rate for women for the 2013 cohort was 50.1 per cent.

For the 2013 cohort application and entry rates increased for both sexes to their highest levels. The entry rate for women increased by 1.9 percentage points (4.6 per cent proportionally) and the entry rate for men increased by 1.6 percentage points (4.3 per cent proportionally). This increased the difference between men and women with the percentage point difference reaching 9.5 percentage points, the largest recorded.

Figure 88 UK domiciled cohort application and entry rates by sex



Entry rates for women were higher than for men at all types of providers

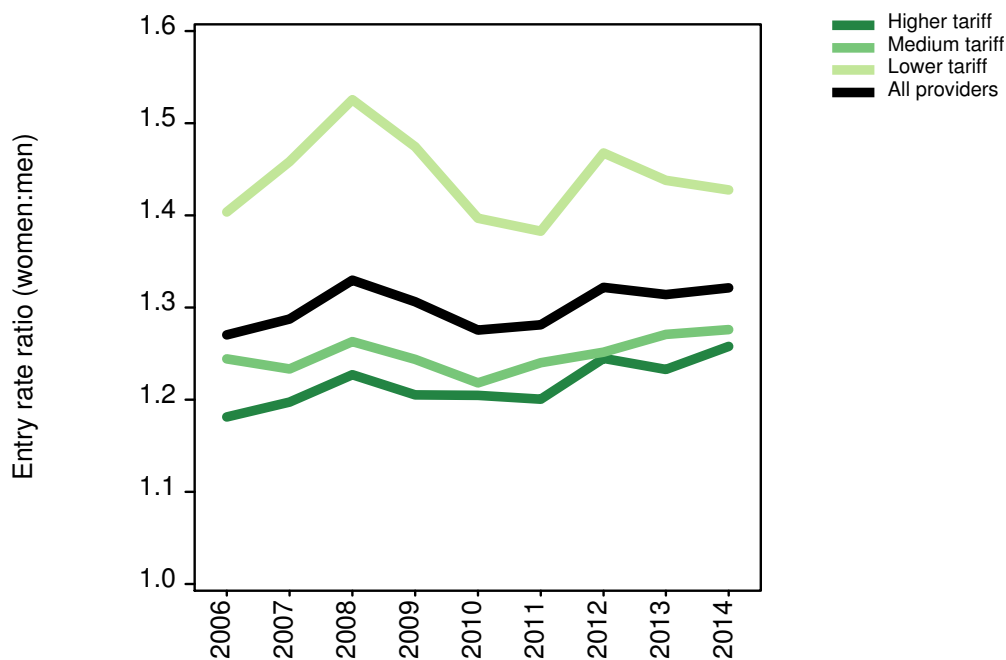
The entry rate ratios of UK 18 year old women to men for entry to different groups of providers are shown in Figure 89. 18 year old women were around 30 per cent more likely to enter all types of higher education than 18 year old men. The entry rate ratios were greater than 1.0 for entry to all three provider tariff groups. That is, young women were more likely to enter all of these types of providers than young men.

In all cycles the entry rate ratio between women and men was lower for higher tariff providers than other provider tariff groups at around 1.2 (that is, young women were around 20 per cent more likely to enter higher tariff providers). Over the period 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; in 2014 they were 26 per cent more likely to enter than men, the highest relative difference in this period.

The entry rate ratio for medium tariff providers in 2014 was 1.28. That is, women were around 28 per cent more likely to enter medium tariff providers than men.

Lower tariff providers had the greatest entry rate ratio between men and women for each cycle. The ratio was variable from cycle-to-cycle but at least 1.4 in each year. In 2014, 18 year old UK women were 43 per cent more likely to enter lower tariff providers than men.

Figure 89 Ratio for UK 18 year olds of entry rate from women to entry rate from men by provider tariff group



Differences in entry rates by background were greater for men than for women and reduce for both sexes in 2014

The entry rates for men and women from the most advantaged areas (POLAR2 Q5) and most disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) are shown in Figure 90. The entry rates from the most advantaged areas were greater than the entry rates from the most disadvantaged areas, and the entry rates for women were greater than the entry rates for men from both areas.

Figure 91 shows the ratios of the entry rates from the most advantaged areas divided by the entry rates for the most disadvantaged areas for men and women. For both men and women, 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. The entry rate ratios decreased in each cycle between 2006 and 2014, but in each cycle the entry ratio was greater for men than women.

For UK 18 year olds in 2006, men in the most advantaged areas were over four times more likely to enter higher education than men in the least advantaged areas. Women in the most advantaged areas were over three times more likely to enter higher education than those in the most disadvantaged areas.

By 2014 these entry rate ratios had decreased for men and women. The relative differences by background for men reduced by more than the ratios for women, but remained greater than the differences by background for women. In 2014, men from the most advantaged areas were 2.9 times more likely to enter higher education than men from the most disadvantaged areas, compared with women where the ratio was 2.3.

Disadvantaged 18 year old women are around 50 per cent more likely to enter than men in 2014

Young entry rates are higher for 18 year old women than men, in both advantaged and disadvantaged areas. In 2014 the percentage point differences between men and women were similar by background; 7.1 percentage points for disadvantaged areas, 7.5 percentage points in advantaged areas. The much lower entry rates in disadvantaged areas means that the proportional difference in entry between men and women is much larger in disadvantaged areas. In 2014, 18 year old women living in disadvantaged areas were around 50 per cent more likely to enter than men.

Figure 90 UK 18 year olds entry rates from most advantaged (POLAR2 Q5) areas and from most disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) by sex.

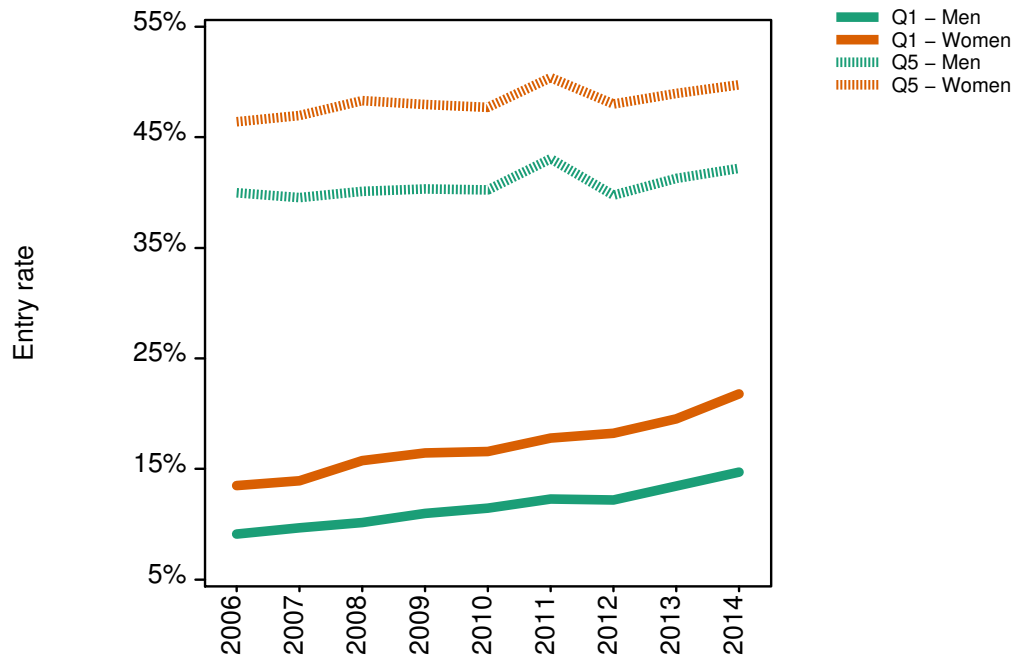
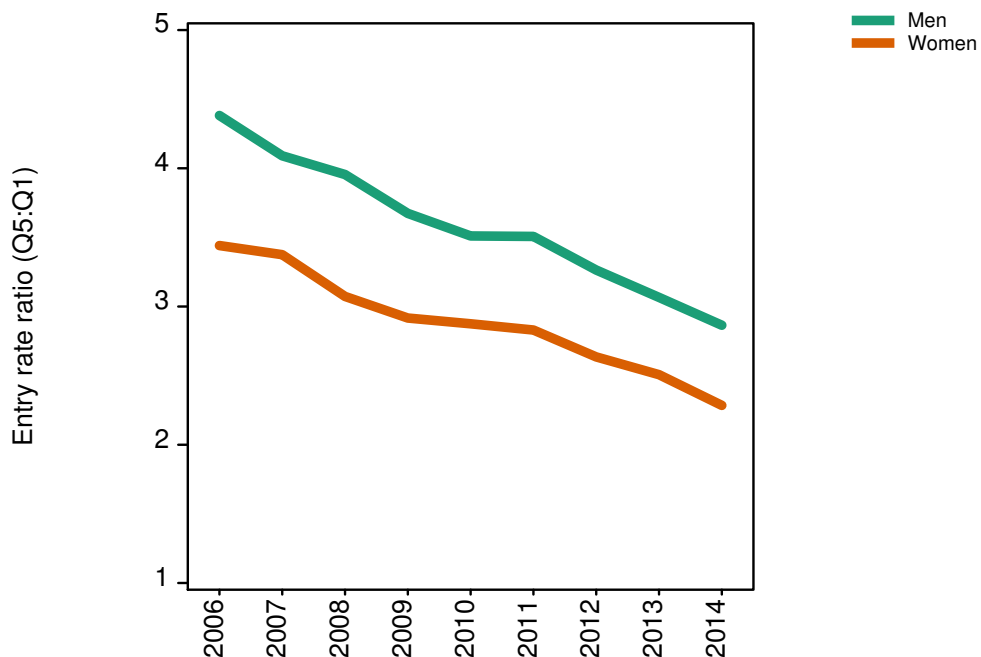


Figure 91 UK 18 year olds ratio of entry rate from most advantaged (POLAR2 Q5) areas to entry rate from most disadvantaged areas (POLAR2 Q1) by sex.



Entry rates for young men lower than for young women but geographies are similar

For 18 year old men in 2014 entry rates varied between 9 per cent and 49 per cent across constituencies. For 18 year old women the entry rate ranged between 12 per cent and 56 per cent.

The geographical pattern of higher and lower 18 year old entry rates for men by constituency is similar to that for 18 year old women but with men having a lower entry rate. The range in entry rates across constituencies is larger than the differences in entry rates between men and women within a constituency.

The entry rates for Scotland will be lower than the total entry to high education since not all higher education providers in Scotland use UCAS.

Figure 92 Entry rates for 18 year old men by parliamentary constituency

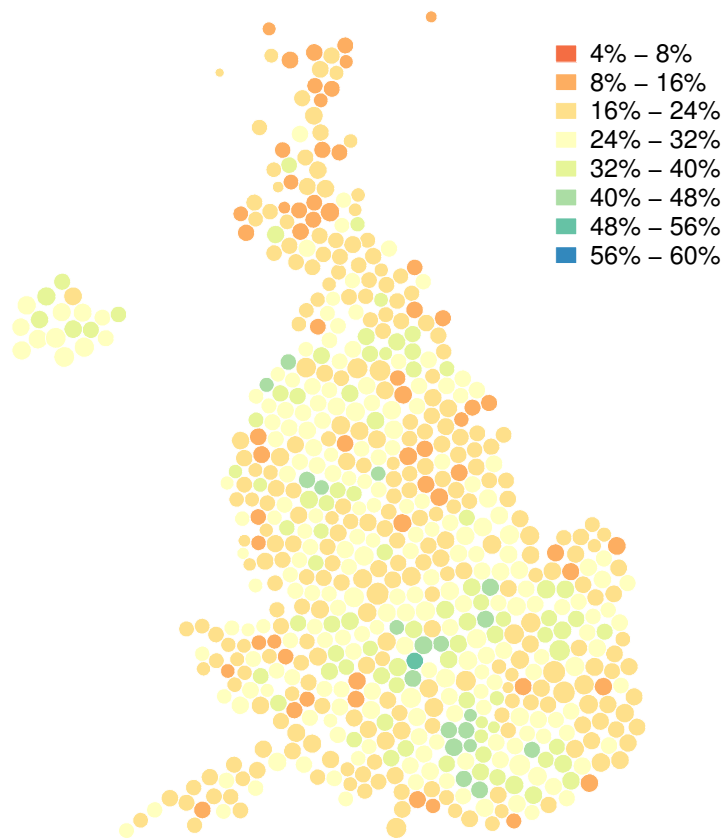
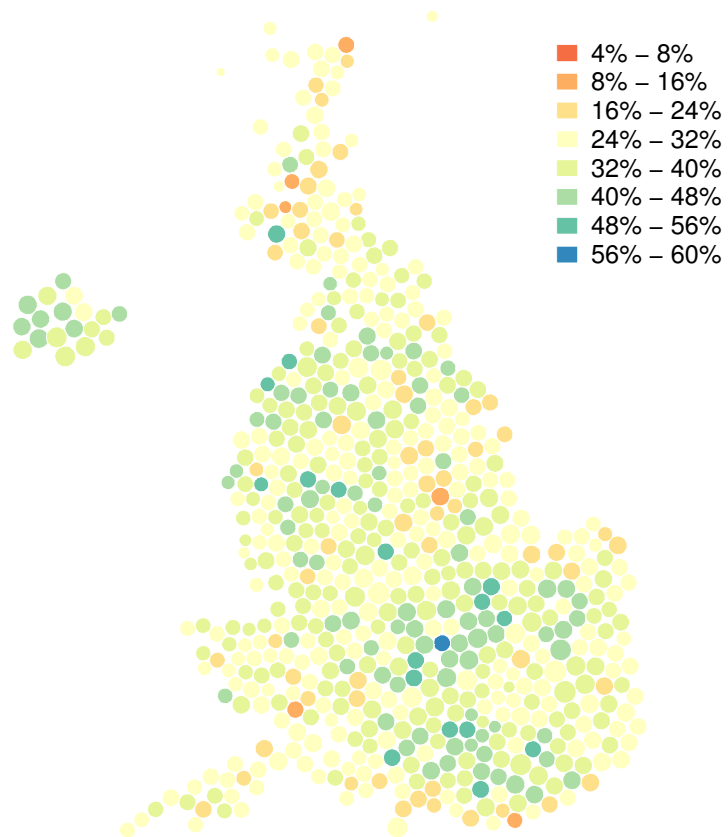


Figure 93 Entry rates for UK 18 year old women by parliamentary constituency



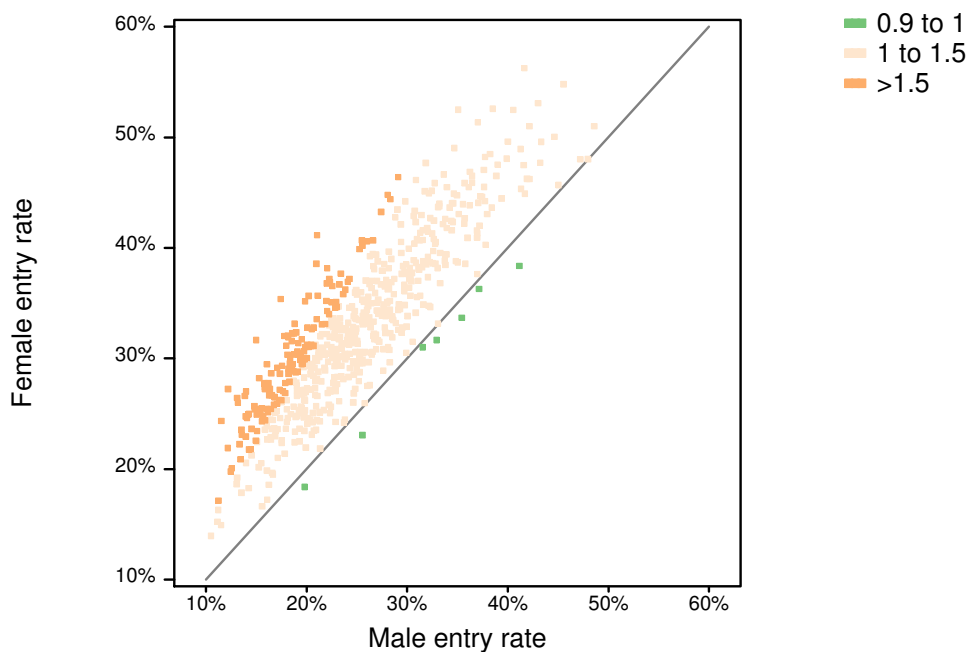
Entry rates in 2014 for 18 year old women higher than men in 98 per cent of UK constituencies

In 2014 the entry rate for 18 year old women was higher than for men in almost all (639 out of 650, 98 per cent) constituencies. In almost a quarter of constituencies (147 out of 650, 23 per cent) young women were at least 50 per cent more likely to enter than men in 2014.

In 2014 there were very few constituencies where entry rates for men and women were the same (4 out of 650, 1 per cent) or where entry rates for men were higher than for women (7 out of 650, 1 per cent).

Parliamentary constituency populations by sex (around 500 18 year olds of each sex) are very small relative to country or, for example, POLAR groups by sex. The small denominators for the constituency rates by sex result in substantial random variation from year to year. This is reflected in those constituencies where men had higher entry rates in 2014 typically not showing that pattern in earlier cycles. The number of these constituencies observed each cycle would be consistent with the national pattern of higher entry rates for women than men being reflected in similar underlying propensities in each constituency, with cases where the entry rate is higher for men resulting from random variations.

Figure 94 Ratio of entry rates for 18 year women to that of men in 2014 by constituency



Constituencies where women were much more likely to enter than men have lower entry rates

In 2014 18 year old women had entry rates 50 per cent or more higher (proportionally) than men in almost a quarter of constituencies.

The majority of these constituencies have overall entry rates (for men and women combined) of between 20 to 30 per cent, less than the national average. Amongst constituencies with overall entry rates above the national average there are relatively few constituencies where women have entry rates 50 per cent or more higher than men.

This is reflected in the geography of these areas being associated with regions with lower entry rates. In the North East, which has one of the lowest entry rates in 2014, women were proportionally much more likely to enter than men in around four out of ten constituencies. In London, which has the highest entry rate in 2014, there were around one in ten constituencies where women were proportionally much more likely to enter than men.

Figure 95 Distribution of English 18 year old 2014 entry rates by parliamentary constituency showing the ratio of entry rates from women relative to that of men

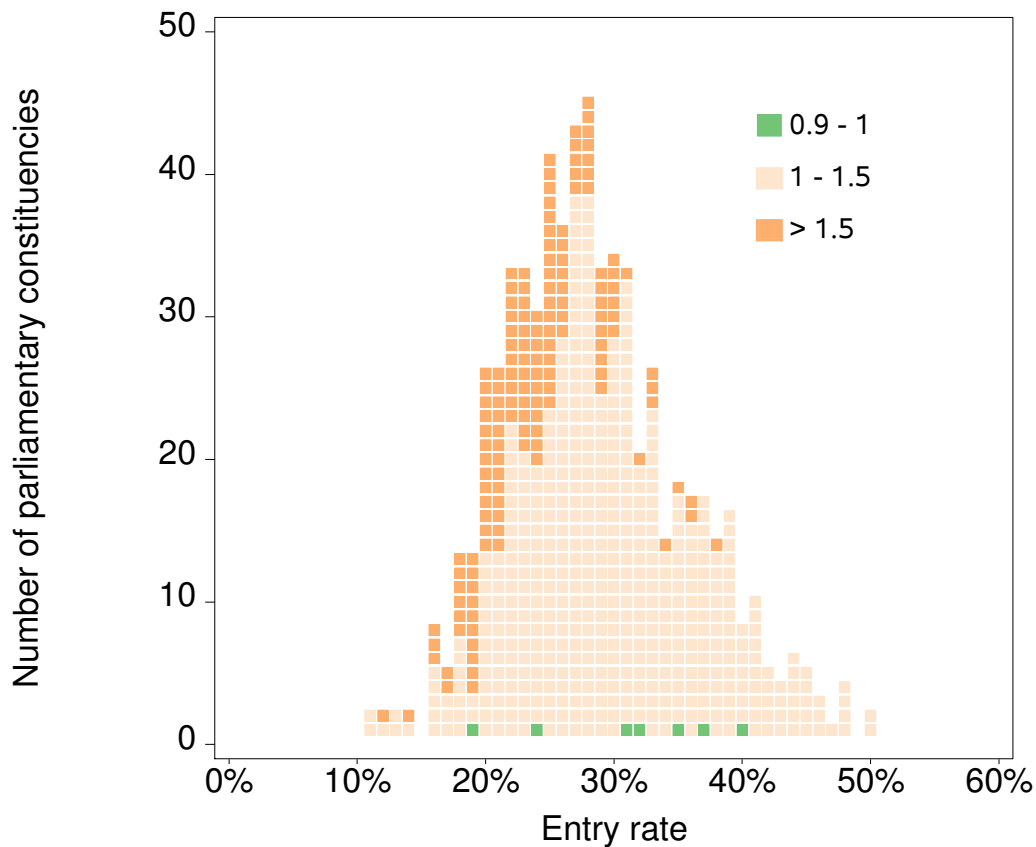
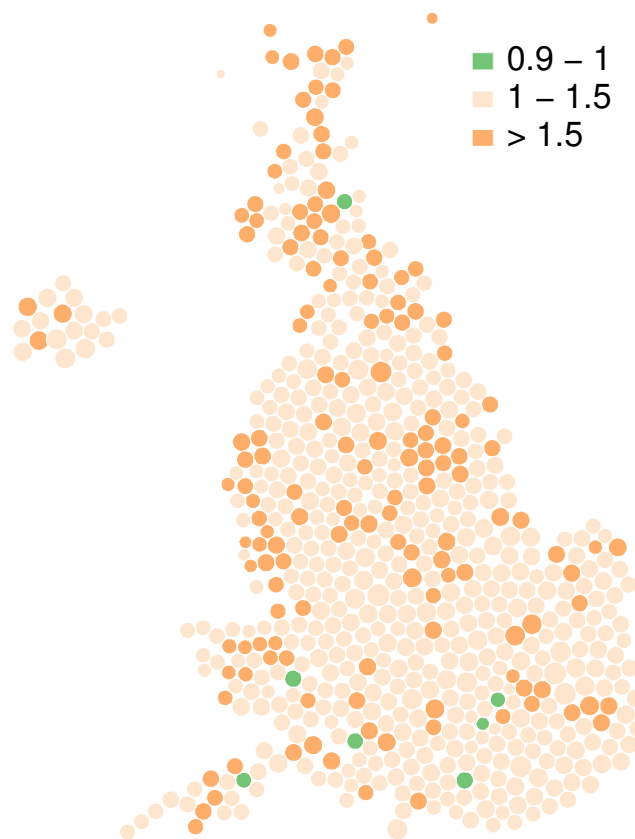


Figure 96 Ratio of 2014 18 year old entry rate of women relative to that of men by constituency





Section 3

Reference tables

UCAS

Reference tables

Applicants are reported as individuals who have applied to a UCAS cycle, this will include applications for deferred entry. Accepted applicants are also reported in the cycle through which they applied, irrespective of whether they were accepted for immediate or deferred entry.

Counts of the number of applicants reported have been rounded to the nearest 5, which may result in instances where totals do not equal the sum of the components.

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Applicants & acceptances

Table 1:

Applicants and acceptances for full-time undergraduate courses at UK higher education providers (2010-2014)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total applicants	697,350	700,160	653,635	677,375	699,685
Total accepted applicants	487,330	492,030	464,910	495,595	512,370
Total unplaced applicants	210,020	208,130	188,725	181,775	187,315
Acceptance rate	69.9%	70.3%	71.1%	73.2%	73.2%

Table 2:

Applicants and acceptances by domicile group (2010-2014)

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
England	Applicants	494,365	496,635	454,000	471,120	487,870
	Accepted applicants	359,005	367,150	342,755	367,900	382,515
Northern Ireland	Applicants	19,680	20,240	19,375	20,545	20,570
	Accepted applicants	13,505	13,790	13,285	14,555	14,455
Scotland	Applicants	46,345	46,015	45,115	45,720	44,785
	Accepted applicants	32,250	30,800	30,900	31,495	30,315
Wales	Applicants	24,910	24,975	24,845	24,595	25,065
	Accepted applicants	18,670	18,325	19,305	19,665	20,165
UK	Applicants	585,300	587,865	543,340	561,985	578,290
	Accepted applicants	423,430	430,070	406,240	433,610	447,450
EU (excluding UK)	Applicants	47,320	49,275	43,150	44,835	46,830
	Accepted applicants	25,605	26,700	23,235	24,510	26,380
Not EU	Applicants	64,730	63,020	67,150	70,555	74,560
	Accepted applicants	38,290	35,260	35,435	37,475	38,535
All	Applicants	697,350	700,160	653,635	677,375	699,685
	Accepted applicants	487,330	492,030	464,910	495,595	512,370

Not all HE providers in Scotland use UCAS. Therefore the share of total HE provision in Scotland that is recorded through UCAS can change by both cycle and background. Also, recruitment to Scottish providers in 2014 recorded through UCAS may be up to 2,000 fewer than the reporting base in recent cycles following some changes to reporting of late acceptances.

Table 3:**Applicants and acceptances by domicile and age group (2010-2014)**

			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
UK	17 and under	Applicants	2,795	2,420	2,080	1,970	1,895
		Accepted applicants	1,715	1,490	1,375	1,325	1,220
	18	Applicants	270,350	269,195	260,360	262,850	268,760
		Accepted applicants	213,120	217,655	212,105	219,320	224,555
	19	Applicants	105,940	110,505	93,830	104,655	106,220
		Accepted applicants	84,070	88,050	76,275	87,945	89,340
	20 to 24	Applicants	115,270	117,355	106,010	109,825	113,890
		Accepted applicants	74,345	75,605	70,980	76,860	80,045
	25 to 29	Applicants	36,195	35,025	31,725	33,135	34,400
		Accepted applicants	20,130	19,020	18,035	19,535	20,780
	30 to 34	Applicants	20,300	20,360	18,925	19,035	19,625
		Accepted applicants	11,075	10,750	10,485	10,985	11,575
	35 and over	Applicants	34,450	33,005	30,410	30,515	33,500
		Accepted applicants	18,975	17,495	16,985	17,635	19,930
EU (excluding UK)	17 and under	Applicants	2,950	3,140	3,000	3,170	3,525
		Accepted applicants	1,415	1,500	1,500	1,640	1,910
	18	Applicants	13,220	13,945	13,445	14,095	15,065
		Accepted applicants	7,090	7,510	7,435	7,795	8,685
	19	Applicants	12,595	14,180	12,455	13,155	13,690
		Accepted applicants	7,165	8,080	6,965	7,505	7,935
	20 to 24	Applicants	15,350	15,035	11,865	12,105	12,340
		Accepted applicants	8,485	8,260	6,285	6,545	6,925
	25 to 29	Applicants	2,270	2,115	1,585	1,545	1,495
		Accepted applicants	1,035	1,015	730	720	645
	30 to 34	Applicants	550	520	445	435	385
		Accepted applicants	255	210	175	185	150
	35 and over	Applicants	380	340	355	330	335
		Accepted applicants	165	125	145	125	130

			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Not EU	17 and under	Applicants	3,755	3,935	4,840	5,565	6,195
		Accepted applicants	1,790	1,790	2,140	2,385	2,650
	18	Applicants	15,745	17,060	19,430	21,895	23,505
		Accepted applicants	8,735	9,335	10,125	11,325	11,730
	19	Applicants	14,745	15,290	16,270	16,860	18,335
		Accepted applicants	8,965	8,945	9,180	9,720	10,225
	20 to 24	Applicants	24,420	22,070	22,250	22,150	22,510
		Accepted applicants	15,765	13,225	12,365	12,495	12,365
	25 to 29	Applicants	3,745	2,985	2,760	2,660	2,555
		Accepted applicants	1,860	1,310	1,095	1,045	1,015
	30 to 34	Applicants	1,290	1,025	920	840	845
		Accepted applicants	630	410	310	300	325
	35 and over	Applicants	1,030	660	675	580	615
		Accepted applicants	545	245	225	205	220
All	17 and under	Applicants	9,500	9,490	9,920	10,710	11,610
		Accepted applicants	4,920	4,780	5,015	5,350	5,780
	18	Applicants	299,315	300,205	293,235	298,840	307,330
		Accepted applicants	228,945	234,500	229,665	238,440	244,975
	19	Applicants	133,285	139,975	122,555	134,670	138,250
		Accepted applicants	100,200	105,080	92,415	105,170	107,500
	20 to 24	Applicants	155,040	154,460	140,125	144,080	148,745
		Accepted applicants	98,595	97,090	89,625	95,900	99,335
	25 to 29	Applicants	42,210	40,125	36,065	37,340	38,450
		Accepted applicants	23,025	21,345	19,860	21,300	22,445
	30 to 34	Applicants	22,140	21,905	20,295	20,310	20,855
		Accepted applicants	11,960	11,370	10,975	11,470	12,055
	35 and over	Applicants	35,860	34,005	31,440	31,425	34,450
		Accepted applicants	19,685	17,865	17,350	17,965	20,280

Table 4:**Applicants and acceptances by domicile and sex (2010-2014)**

			2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
UK	Men	Applicants	252,085	253,810	232,675	241,610	247,080
		Accepted applicants	188,520	192,465	180,435	193,030	197,420
	Women	Applicants	333,215	334,055	310,665	320,375	331,210
		Accepted applicants	234,910	237,605	225,810	240,580	250,030
EU (excluding UK)	Men	Applicants	21,045	21,595	18,605	19,140	19,620
		Accepted applicants	11,830	12,110	10,445	10,900	11,470
	Women	Applicants	26,270	27,680	24,545	25,700	27,210
		Accepted applicants	13,775	14,595	12,790	13,605	14,915
Not EU	Men	Applicants	33,775	31,660	33,790	34,705	35,895
		Accepted applicants	19,735	17,305	17,410	18,135	18,400
	Women	Applicants	30,955	31,360	33,360	35,850	38,665
		Accepted applicants	18,555	17,955	18,025	19,340	20,135
All	Men	Applicants	306,905	307,065	285,070	295,450	302,600
		Accepted applicants	220,085	221,875	208,285	222,070	227,290
	Women	Applicants	390,445	393,095	368,570	381,920	397,085
		Accepted applicants	267,245	270,155	256,625	273,530	285,080

Table 5:**Acceptances by domicile group and provider country (2010-2014)**

Applicant domicile	Provider country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
England	England	344,880	352,235	328,895	353,110	366,475
	Northern Ireland	220	245	330	260	680
	Scotland	3,500	3,245	4,005	4,100	4,675
	Wales	10,400	11,425	9,525	10,430	10,680
Northern Ireland	England	3,430	3,860	3,210	3,370	3,480
	Northern Ireland	8,830	8,640	9,020	10,010	9,855
	Scotland	1,075	1,075	905	1,015	970
	Wales	170	215	145	160	150
Scotland	England	1,790	1,640	1,460	1,565	1,525
	Northern Ireland	20	20	25	15	15
	Scotland	30,380	29,075	29,360	29,850	28,710
	Wales	55	65	55	70	65
Wales	England	6,395	6,460	7,315	7,360	8,090
	Northern Ireland	10	10	5	5	10
	Scotland	90	95	115	105	115
	Wales	12,180	11,765	11,875	12,190	11,955
UK	England	356,495	364,200	340,875	365,405	379,570
	Northern Ireland	9,085	8,915	9,380	10,290	10,560
	Scotland	35,045	33,485	34,385	35,070	34,470
	Wales	22,805	23,470	21,595	22,845	22,850
EU (excluding UK)	England	19,995	20,945	17,350	18,915	20,435
	Northern Ireland	555	440	460	440	455
	Scotland	4,015	4,270	4,400	4,105	4,350
	Wales	1,045	1,045	1,025	1,050	1,145
Not EU	England	33,610	29,925	30,570	32,250	33,165
	Northern Ireland	115	195	200	230	245
	Scotland	3,255	3,405	3,155	3,380	3,180
	Wales	1,315	1,735	1,505	1,615	1,945
All	England	410,100	415,070	388,795	416,570	433,170
	Northern Ireland	9,750	9,550	10,040	10,965	11,260
	Scotland	42,315	41,165	41,945	42,555	42,000
	Wales	25,160	26,250	24,130	25,510	25,935

Not all HE providers in Scotland use UCAS. Therefore the share of total HE provision in Scotland that is recorded through UCAS can change by both cycle and background. Also, recruitment to Scottish providers in 2014 recorded through UCAS may be up to 2,000 fewer than the reporting base in recent cycles following some changes to reporting of late acceptances.

Table 6:**Acceptances by domicile group and tariff band (2010-2014)**

NB Accepted applicants are reported in the cycle through which they applied, irrespective of whether they were accepted for immediate or deferred entry.

Applicant domicile	Tariff band	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
UK	1. Higher tariff group	99,105	94,875	96,015	102,810	105,755
	2. Medium tariff group	132,330	132,430	126,625	134,265	137,025
	3. Lower tariff group	191,995	202,765	183,600	196,535	204,670
EU (excluding UK)	1. Higher tariff group	8,090	8,815	8,560	8,760	9,845
	2. Medium tariff group	8,800	8,610	7,565	7,930	8,065
	3. Lower tariff group	8,720	9,275	7,110	7,820	8,475
Not EU	1. Higher tariff group	16,780	17,690	18,715	20,040	20,245
	2. Medium tariff group	13,830	11,830	11,375	11,790	11,915
	3. Lower tariff group	7,680	5,745	5,350	5,645	6,375
All	1. Higher tariff group	123,970	121,380	123,285	131,610	135,840
	2. Medium tariff group	154,960	152,865	145,565	153,985	157,005
	3. Lower tariff group	208,395	217,780	196,060	210,000	219,520

Table 7:**Acceptances by country and POLAR2 quintile (UK domiciled only, aged 18 2010-2014)**

Applicant domicile	POLAR2 Quintile	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
England	Quintile 1	19,130	19,920	19,890	21,180	22,980
	Quintile 2	27,875	28,865	28,265	29,955	31,465
	Quintile 3	34,700	35,800	34,685	36,535	37,495
	Quintile 4	43,115	44,315	42,550	43,930	44,210
	Quintile 5	53,875	55,990	53,590	54,265	54,955
	Not assigned	400	385	385	400	570
Northern Ireland	Quintile 1	520	480	510	495	535
	Quintile 2	820	845	845	875	895
	Quintile 3	1,530	1,425	1,440	1,555	1,515
	Quintile 4	3,000	2,915	2,795	2,955	2,780
	Quintile 5	2,850	2,905	2,820	2,855	2,705
	Not assigned	20	25	10	20	20
Scotland	Quintile 1	470	395	420	435	485
	Quintile 2	965	950	970	965	1,030
	Quintile 3	1,845	1,770	1,815	1,830	1,815
	Quintile 4	3,585	3,210	3,290	3,335	3,285
	Quintile 5	8,455	7,875	7,910	7,890	7,600
	Not assigned	50	55	50	50	65
Wales	Quintile 1	945	970	1,030	1,000	1,180
	Quintile 2	1,790	1,650	1,790	1,785	1,845
	Quintile 3	1,870	1,810	1,815	1,805	1,845
	Quintile 4	2,115	2,015	2,020	2,050	2,110
	Quintile 5	3,185	3,085	3,185	3,145	3,140
	Not assigned	15	15	25	20	30
UK	Quintile 1	21,065	21,760	21,845	23,110	25,175
	Quintile 2	31,450	32,305	31,870	33,580	35,240
	Quintile 3	39,940	40,800	39,750	41,720	42,670
	Quintile 4	51,810	52,455	50,655	52,275	52,385
	Quintile 5	68,365	69,855	67,510	68,150	68,400
	Not assigned	485	480	470	490	690



Section 4

Glossary

UCAS

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.
Academic year entry rates	The number of acceptances for entry to start higher education within an academic year divided by the base population estimate. These may include acceptances from more than one application cycle. Within-cycle acceptances, those applicants accepted to start in the academic year within which they apply, are excluded from these rates.
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 within the different administrations of the UK. For England and Wales, ages are defined on the 31 August, for Northern Ireland on the 1 July and for Scotland on the 28 February the following year. Defining ages in this way matches the assignment of children to school cohorts. For applicants outside of the UK the cohort cut off for England and Wales has been used.
Applicant	A person who has made an application in the UCAS system.
Application rate	The number of applicants divided by the estimated base population.
Base population estimate	The population estimates are based upon Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates and national population projections. For 16 to 20 year olds the estimates are obtained by aging 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 aging. 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. The small area population estimates used were provided by HEFCE.
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.

Conditional firm	An offer made by a provider dependent on achieving specified conditions which has been accepted by the applicant as their first choice.
Conditional offer	Offer made by provider dependent on meeting specified conditions which may include academic and/or non-academic conditions.
Cycle entry rate	Number of acceptances from a UCAS application cycle divided by the estimated base population.
Defer (deferred)	Most acceptances are into the academic year that starts immediately at the end of the cycle, for example into 2014-15 from the 2014 application cycle. Acceptances can also be deferred for entry into the following academic year, for example into 2015-16 from the 2014 cycle. These are called deferred acceptances.
Direct Clearing	Applied via Clearing without an initial application through the main scheme.
Domicile	Declared area of permanent residence.
Extra	An acceptance route where applicants who held no offers after using all five main scheme choices, 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).
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 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.
Insurance choice	An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their second choice, in case the conditions of the 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 providers/courses 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 (ie applied before 30 June) and subsequently found a place using Clearing.
National pupil database	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

	that were 18 years old in UCAS data three years later.
Non-EU	Countries outside the European Union. Includes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
Offer	Provider decision to grant a place to an applicant; may be subject to satisfying academic and/or other criteria.
ONS	Office for National Statistics.
POLAR2	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). POLAR2 is used in preference to the newer POLAR3 to avoid any distortion of entry rate trends associated with the boundaries to the more recent period used to define POLAR3.
Provider	A higher education provider – a university or college.
RPA	Record of Prior Acceptance, where an application is submitted to UCAS by a provider when an unconditional firm has been offered and accepted by the applicant.
Reply	Applicant response to any offers received, this could be firm, insurance or decline.
Tariff	A numerical summary of qualification level.
Unconditional offer	Offer made by provider when it is satisfied that the applicant has met specific conditions.
UK	United Kingdom. Excludes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
Withdrawal	In this report withdrawal refers to complete withdrawal, where the whole application has been removed from the scheme.



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