

End of cycle report

2017

Executive summary



Introduction

The UCAS End of Cycle Report is the first national overview of demand for and acceptances to UK higher education (HE) for the previous year.

It provides independent in-depth analysis and insight about who's applying and getting in to HE, changing patterns of recruitment and the impacts of qualification, market reforms and widening participation and access activities, drawing on UCAS' many years of expertise in this area. With the current political, social and economic backdrop, and an increasingly competitive higher education market, understanding admissions patterns has rarely been more important.

A summary of the key findings within each of the publications will be shown below as analysis notes are released.

Summary

Applicants and acceptances to higher education; and Patterns by age [published 27 November 2017]

The patterns by age are particularly noteworthy. UK 18 year olds continue to access full time undergraduate higher education through UCAS in record numbers. In 2017, more than 241,500 UK 18 year olds were accepted, more than in any previous year. Set within the wider context of a declining population, the proportion of 18 year olds accessing higher education – one in every three in England – is now higher than ever before.

The continued success of UK higher education providers in attracting 18 year olds may have come at a price. For each successive (and until 2020, smaller) cohort of young people, higher proportions of 18 year olds entering higher education will mean fewer are likely to apply in future years when they are older. In England, record high 18 year old entry rates every year since 2013 have placed downward pressure on the number of 19 year olds applying, and consequently being accepted. This, in combination with changes to student support arrangements for those starting nursing courses in England, and a favourable employment market, will all have played a role in the drop in applications and acceptances from older age groups this year. These falls mean that, for the first time since 2012, overall UK acceptances have decreased. However, this 0.5 per cent decrease still puts UK acceptances at the third highest on record.

Although UK acceptances are down this year, the number accepted from outside the UK increased by 2 per cent to the highest ever total, the fifth successive year acceptances from this group have increased. Within this, there is a fall in acceptances from within the EU (excluding the UK), which are 2 per cent lower than last year. But this decrease in EU acceptances is more than compensated for with a 5 per cent increase in acceptances from outside the EU, as UK higher education

continues to be a popular destination for those domiciled overseas who wish to continue their studies.

Patterns by subject [to be published 4 December 2017]

[key findings available from 4 December 2017]

Patterns of entry to higher education by UK geography and EU country [to be published 11 December 2017]

[key findings available from 11 December 2017]

Equality of sector; Patterns in offer making; and Qualifications analysis [to be published 14 December 2017]

[key findings available from 14 December 2017]