

## B32: unconditional offers

### University of Birmingham's perspective on unconditional offers:

*Unconditional offers form a small part of a wider and well-developed admissions strategy, that has a firm focus on supporting students to make the right choice for them. Our strategy includes a far greater proportion of conditional and contextual offers, and is centred on recruiting students who will benefit the most from their time with us, whilst minimising the stress associated with securing a university place.*

*We know that students in receipt of an unconditional offer from the University of Birmingham do not experience the attainment gap seen in other parts of the sector, and those students accepting an unconditional offer are among our best performing group once they join us.*

*In addition to reducing anxiety around exams, we track student retention data so we know that having an unconditional offer has no bearing on the likelihood of a student dropping out of their course.*

*We use a range of information as part of our approach, including a student's personal statement, reference, previous and predicted academic performance, contextual data as well as interviews and admission tests in certain subjects. Our criteria are reviewed regularly, and students can gain early insight into the likelihood of them gaining an offer from us, including an unconditional offer, through the use of our Online Offer Calculator.*

*We only make unconditional offers to students who are predicted to achieve exceptional grades in their A levels, and have a history of high performance demonstrated by excellent GCSE grades (never lower than a combination of three predicted As at A level, and seven As at GCSE, and usually higher). We now find that only 1 in 2 predicted A level grades turn out to be accurate, and that GCSEs provide a much more accurate indicator of academic performance once a student joins us.*

*We employ unconditional offers in subjects where the entry requirements, in part, focus on the ability of a prospective student to perform to a certain standard, such as Theatre Arts. Our experience shows that offers based on predicted grades are less useful than our internal assessment of a student's potential ability in these subjects. We also focus on programmes that may be less attractive nationally to applicants, or that are strategically important for the institution, and country, for example in Modern Languages, which has seen a national fall in applications of nearly a third since 2011, and in our Business School. We strongly believe in the benefits of providing a robust, high quality offering in these and other areas, not only for the benefit of the university and our students, but also as important skills for the workforce.*

## Definitions of offer types:

### Unconditional offer

This is an offer made by a provider where they are satisfied that an individual has demonstrated sufficient attainment and potential to succeed on their chosen programme. Based on the offer status at the 30 June application deadline.

### Conditional unconditional offer

An offer made by a provider which was originally conditional, but becomes unconditional if the applicant selects that offer as their firm (first) choice. By definition, conditional unconditional offers that are selected as a firm choice by the applicant become unconditional and are also included in the unconditional offers group (see above).

### Offer with an unconditional component

All offers showing as having an element of unconditional offer-making, that is, unconditional offers plus conditional unconditional offers that have not been selected as firm (and hence remain conditional unconditional).

### All offers

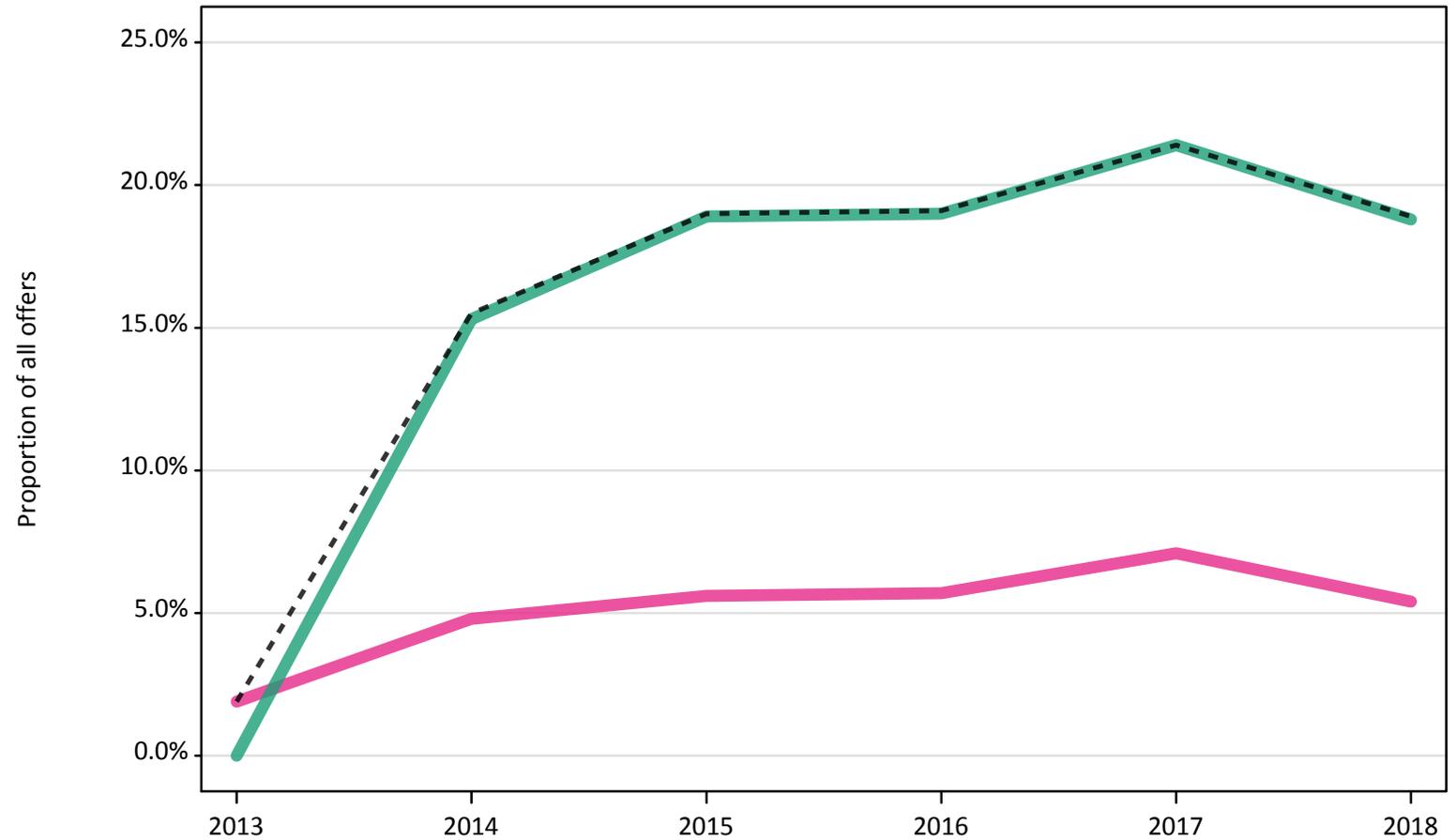
All offers made by the provider, subject to the coverage of this report. This includes conditional as well as unconditional offers to 18-year-old main scheme applicants domiciled in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

**Technical note:**

The coverage of this report is limited to offers made by 30 June, to 18-year-old main scheme applicants domiciled in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales. This is because these applicants are least likely to apply already having achieved a full set of qualifications typically required for undergraduate higher education.

**A.1 Proportion of all offers that are unconditional, by cycle year**

- Unconditional offers
- Conditional unconditional offers
- Offers with unconditional component



## A.2 Unconditional offers by cycle year

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Unconditional offers	330	940	1,165	1,265	1,925	1,355
Conditional unconditional offers	0	3,020	3,945	4,215	5,800	4,750
Offers with unconditional component	330	3,065	3,960	4,225	5,805	4,765
All offers (conditional and unconditional)	17,295	19,765	20,835	22,150	27,085	25,265

## A.3 Proportion of all offers that are unconditional, by cycle year

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Unconditional offers	1.9%	4.8%	5.6%	5.7%	7.1%	5.4%
Conditional unconditional offers	0.0%	15.3%	18.9%	19.0%	21.4%	18.8%
Offers with unconditional component	1.9%	15.5%	19.0%	19.1%	21.4%	18.9%

Note: Percentage values are not printed in the above table if the total rounded number of offers for that year is below 100.