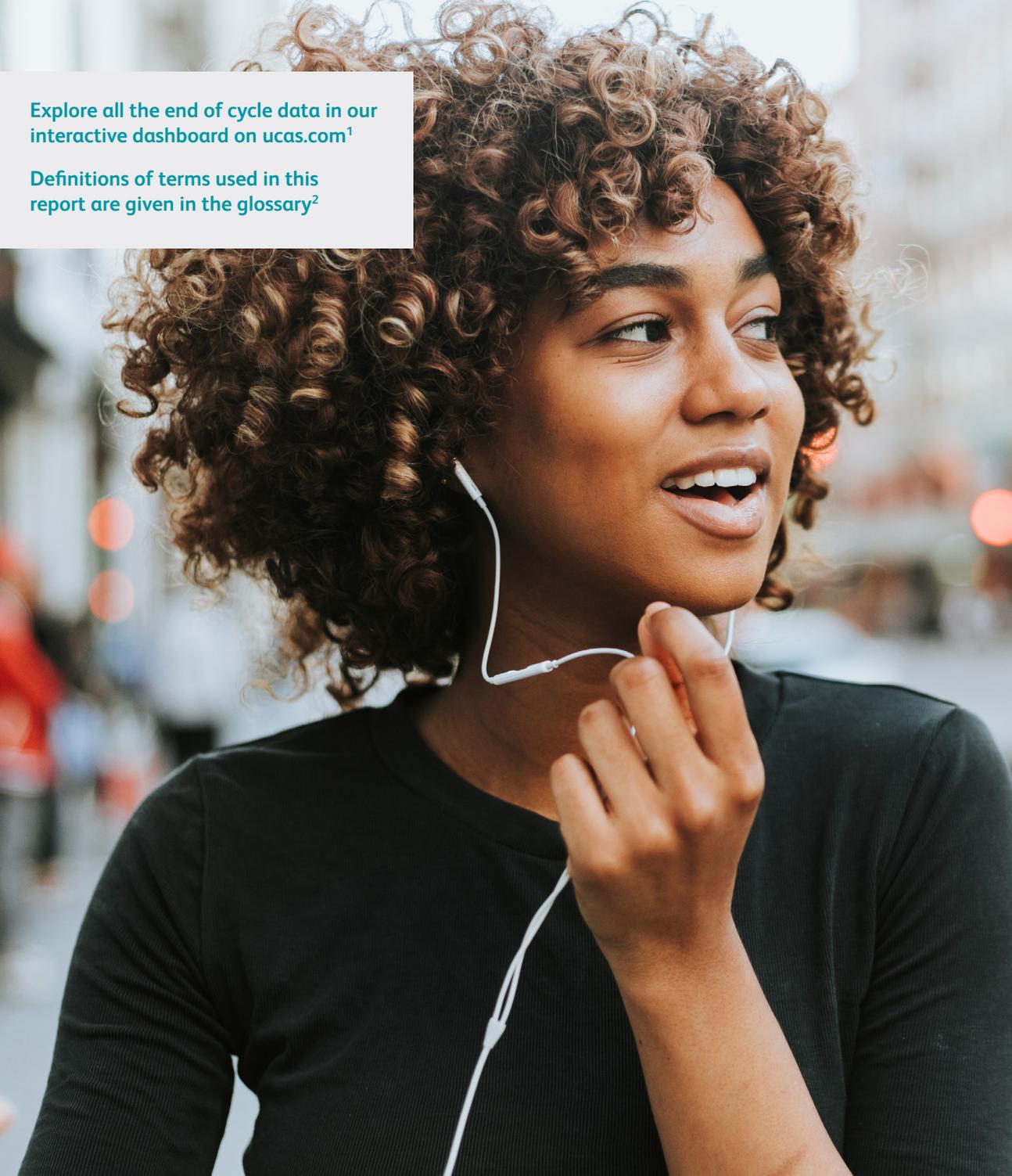


UCAS END OF CYCLE REPORT 2019

CHAPTER 10: EQUALITY IN ENGLAND

- > Some progress made in reducing the multiple equality measure (MEM) equality gap, which is now at a record low.
- > MEM equality gap remains most pronounced at higher tariff providers, but this has reduced significantly since 2018.
- > The most underrepresented students (MEM group one) are more likely to study closer to home.
- > The free school meals (FSM) equality gap narrows for the second consecutive year. This is the largest proportional decrease since 2011.
- > Largest proportional increase in the entry rate for Black students, which reaches its highest level since 2006.



Explore all the end of cycle data in our interactive dashboard on ucas.com¹

Definitions of terms used in this report are given in the glossary²

All analysis in this report makes use of UCAS data on higher education (HE) entry, linked to the National Pupil Database (NPD)³, and therefore necessarily covers 18 year old England domiciled applicants to full-time undergraduate degree level courses in the UK. The NPD data points are as recorded on the day of the school census. Information on ethnic group and FSM for pupils in independent schools is not included in the NPD, and so this cohort is excluded from the FSM and ethnic group analysis. Independent school pupils are included in the MEM group analysis. We are actively working with government departments across the rest of the UK to gain access to the underlying school pupil data, equivalent to the NPD in England, which will allow for UK-wide multidimensional equality analysis. Trends in equality and participation for all UK 18 year olds can be found in Chapter 6: Widening participation and access⁴.

¹ www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2019

² www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-reports/2019-end-cycle-report

³ Source: National Pupil Database (NPD) and School Census, Department for Education.

⁴ www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-reports/2019-end-cycle-report

STUDENTS IN MEM GROUP FIVE ARE 4.40 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO ENTER HE THAN THOSE IN GROUP ONE

The multiple equality measure (MEM)

The MEM is an equality metric covering English 18 year olds, combining the effects of many of the measures currently used in the analysis of equality in HE into a single value.⁵ UCAS research suggested that the analysis of equality, based solely on a single equality measure, was resulting in subgroups of students who were most disadvantaged in their likelihood of entering HE being at risk of not being identified. The MEM aims to provide a more individual-specific analysis of equality. A student's full complement of background information is considered, by examining multiple background characteristics simultaneously using a data-driven method to produce an evidence-based measure of equality, for use at either an individual or aggregate-level.

The MEM takes the form of one to five group value. An individual who is in MEM group one is among the most disadvantaged in terms of their likelihood to enter higher education, based on their set of background characteristics. Conversely, an individual in MEM group five is among the most advantaged.

There were modest increases in entry rates of all MEM groups in 2019, reflecting the increase in the entry rate of England domiciled 18 year olds, which rose by 3.9 per cent proportionally, to 35% in 2019. The entry rate of students in MEM group one (the most disadvantaged group) increased by 6.9 per cent proportionally, to a value of 13.1 per cent in 2019. This was nearly three times the increase seen in the entry rate of students from MEM group five (the most advantaged group), which rose by 2.5 per cent proportionally to 57.7 per cent.

The larger proportional increase in the entry rate of MEM group one compared to MEM group five means that the entry rate gap between these two groups narrowed in 2019, with pupils in group five 4.40 times more likely to enter HE than those in group one, compared to 4.58 times in 2018. While this equality gap remains substantial, it is the lowest on record, and the largest proportional decrease since 2014.

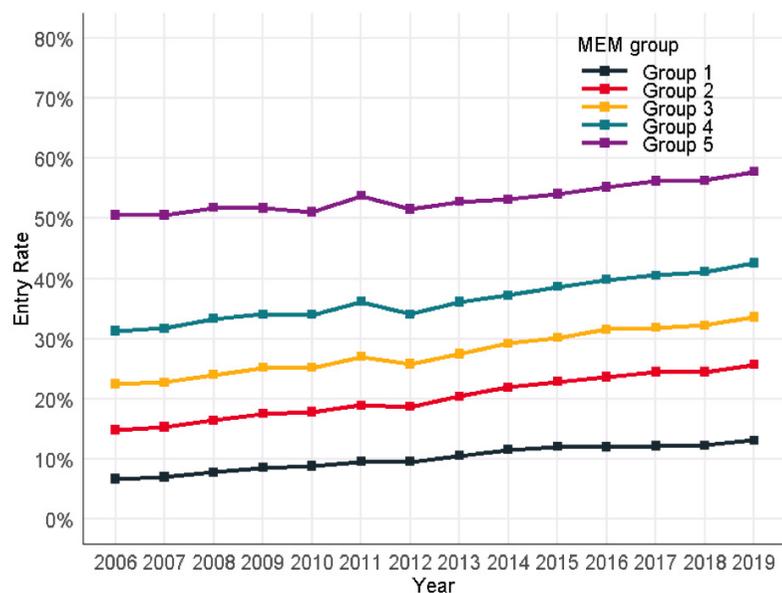


FIGURE 1: Entry rates for England domiciled 18 year old students by MEM group

⁵ It is based on statistical modelling techniques, using UCAS' data on progression to HE, linked with National Pupil Database (NPD) data on English school student characteristics (POLAR3 quintile, ethnic group, gender, free school meals status, Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), and school type) to produce an evidence-based measure of equality at either individual or aggregate-level. For more information on the MEM, please see the MEM **summary** and **technical** reports.





65% OF STUDENTS FROM MEM GROUP ONE GAIN ENTRY WITH A DRIVE TIME OF LESS THAN ONE HOUR

The MEM equality gap differs greatly between providers in different tariff groups. In 2019, this gap has narrowed across higher and medium tariff providers, and remained the same at lower tariff providers.

Although the gap between the most and least disadvantaged applicants to higher tariff providers remains large, with advantaged applicants currently 13.64 times (compared to 15.0 in 2018) as likely to enter university as the most disadvantaged, significant progress has been made this year in narrowing this gap – in contrast to the widening of it seen in 2018. This is largely attributable to corresponding progress in the narrowing of the gap as measured by POLAR4 (reported in Chapter 6: Widening Access and Participation), but is also a consequence of the progress made in closing the gap in entry rate between those in receipt of FSM and those not in receipt of FSM this year.

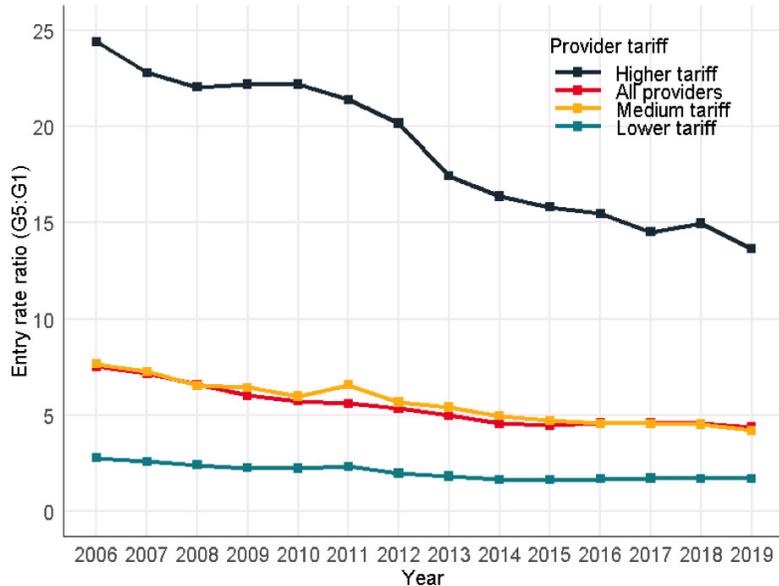


FIGURE 2: The ratio between entry rates to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers for MEM group five and MEM group one England domiciled 18 year olds

Previous UCAS research has shown the distance applicants travel to university or college varies with applicant age⁶. We see a similar variation when looking at distance travelled according to MEM group. Students from MEM group one are considerably more likely to study closer to home (average drive time of 65 minutes), compared to those in MEM group five (115 minutes). Similarly, 65% of students from MEM group one have a drive time of less than an hour, compared to 35% of their counterparts from MEM group five.

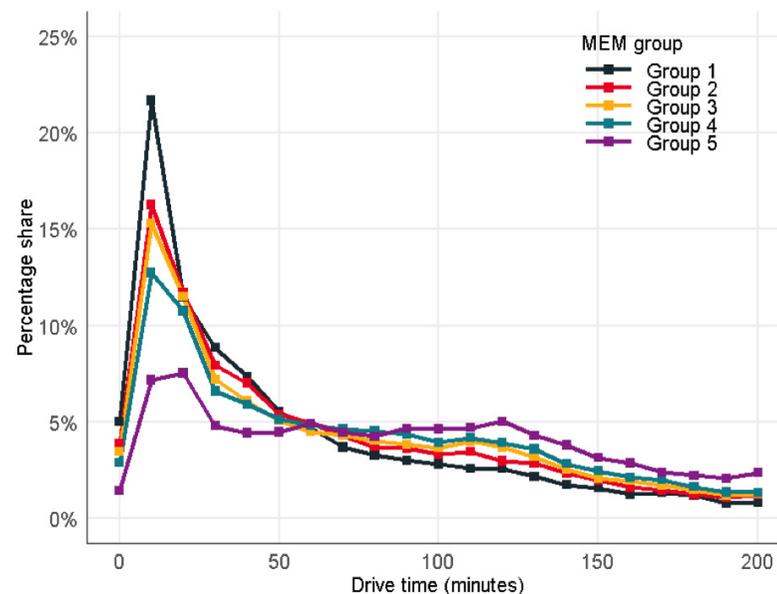


FIGURE 3: Percentage share of English 18 year old accepted applicants by drive time and MEM group

⁶ Admissions patterns for mature applicants, UCAS 2018

10.9% PROPORTIONAL NARROWING OF THE ENTRY RATE GAP BETWEEN THOSE IN RECEIPT OF FSM AND THOSE NOT IN RECEIPT OF FSM AT HIGHER TARIFF PROVIDERS

Free school meals (FSM)

FSM is a means-tested benefit that can serve as an indicator of those from low income families⁷. Each year, between 12.5 and 15.0 per cent of 15 year old state school pupils in England receive FSM.

The increase in entry rate in 2019 among those who were in receipt of FSM was 9.6 per cent proportionally – around twice the proportional increase seen for those who were not in receipt of FSM. Therefore, the entry rate gap between these two groups narrowed in 2019, reaching a record low, with those not in receipt of FSM 1.88 times more likely to enter HE than those who were. Nonetheless the entry rate of those not in receipt of FSM (35.6 per cent) remains considerably higher than the entry rate of those in receipt of FSM (18.9 per cent).

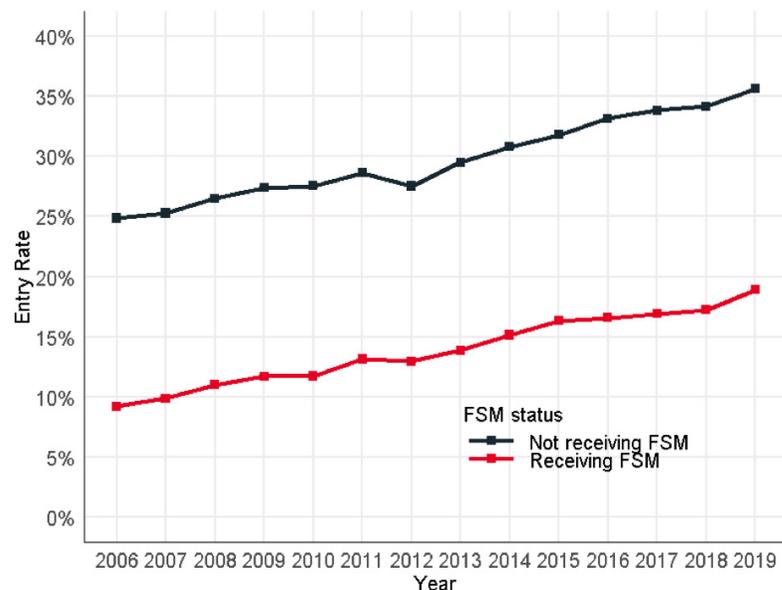


FIGURE 4: Entry rates for England domiciled 18 year old state school students by FSM status at age 15

The gap in entry rates between students in receipt of FSM and those not in receipt of FSM has decreased across all provider tariff groups since 2006. The entry rate gap between students who received FSM and those who did not receive FSM remains greatest among higher tariff providers. However, in 2019, the gap narrowed by a considerable 10.9 per cent proportionally, so that non-FSM students are 3.36 times more likely to be accepted to higher tariff providers than FSM students (compared to 3.77 times in 2018).

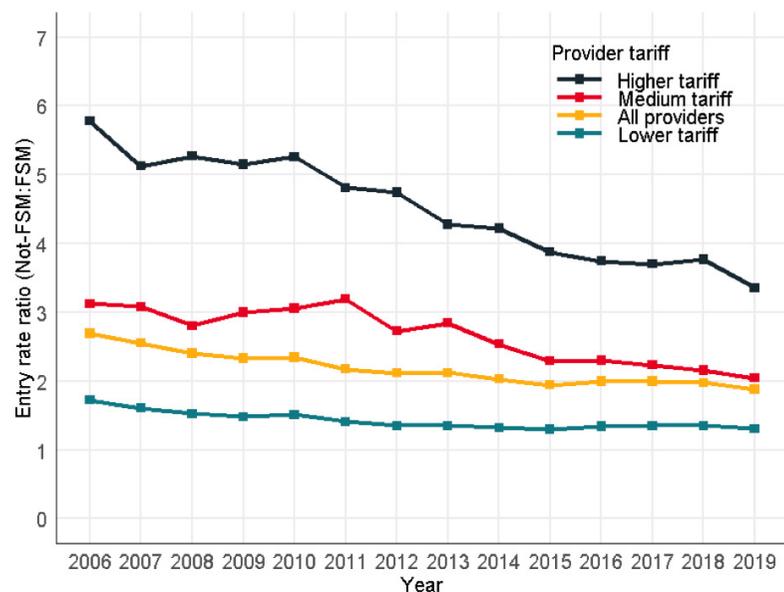
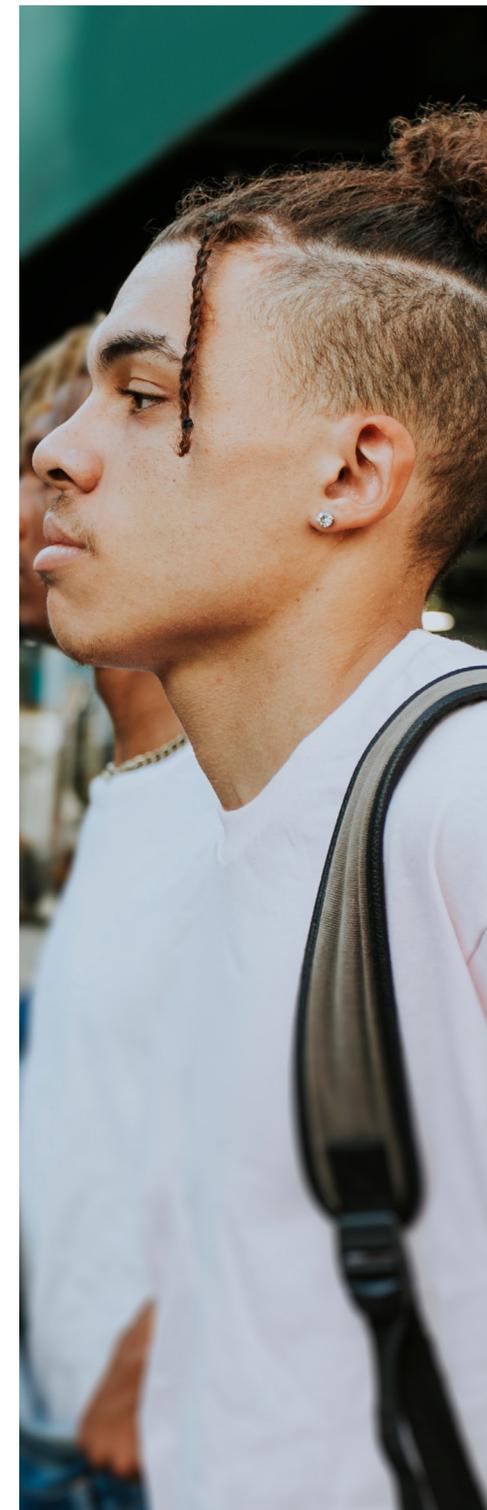


FIGURE 5: The ratio between entry rates for England domiciled 18 year old state school students to higher, medium, and lower tariff providers for FSM and non-FSM groups at age 15

⁷ This report considers the entry rate of former state school students in England who were in receipt of FSM at age 15, as recorded in the National Pupil Database (source: National Pupil Database and School Census, Department for Education) against the entry rate of students who were not in receipt of FSM at the same age.



Ethnic group

Differences exist in the likelihood of entering HE for students in different ethnic groups⁸.

This year, entry rates rose for pupils of all ethnic groups who had attended state schools in England, reflective of the increase in the entry rate of England domiciled 18 year olds.

As has been the case since 2007, former English state school pupils recorded as being in the Chinese ethnic group continue to have the highest entry rate to higher education (68.0%), while those from the White ethnic group have the lowest (30.3%). Overall, the entry rate gap between these two groups remained stable in 2019, with Chinese students 2.24 times more likely to enter HE than White students.

Conversely, the Chinese ethnic group experienced the smallest proportional increase in entry rate (2.6 per cent), while the Black ethnic group had the largest proportional year-on-year increase (8.2 per cent).

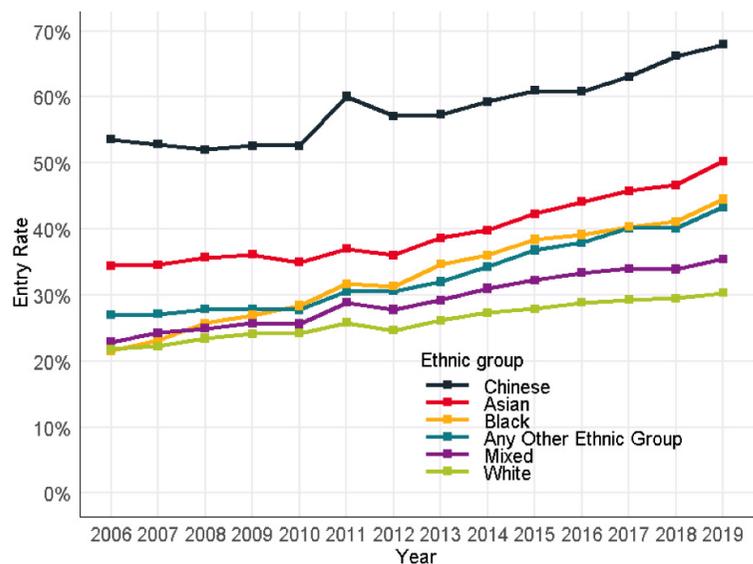


FIGURE 6: Entry rates for England domiciled 18 year old state school students by ethnic group

8.2% PROPORTIONAL INCREASE IN THE BLACK ETHNIC GROUP ENTRY RATE – THIS IS NOW AT A RECORD HIGH

Patterns of entry rate behaviour by ethnic group across provider tariff remained similar to those seen in recent years. The Chinese ethnic group have the highest entry rate to higher and medium tariff providers, and the Asian ethnic group demonstrate the highest entry rate to lower tariff providers.

In 2019, the entry rate gap narrowed across higher and medium tariff providers, but widened slightly at lower tariff providers. The Black ethnic group entry rate to higher tariff providers rose by 14.1 per cent proportionally – which is the biggest increase since 2013, and the biggest proportional increase of any ethnic group this year.

⁸ In this report, we examine the entry rates to HE for English former state school pupils by their ethnic group, as recorded in the National Pupil Database (source: National Pupil Database and School Census, Department for Education).





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UCAS, a company limited by guarantee, is registered in England and Wales.
Registered number: 2839815.

Registered charity number:
1024741 (England and Wales) and SC038598 (Scotland)

Publication reference: MD-5927

Published by: UCAS, Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, GL52 3LZ.