

Technical notes and definitions

Variable	Definition
30 June application deadline	The final date by which an applicant can submit up to five applications to study on a course of higher education through the UCAS main scheme. Applicants who apply after this date go directly into Clearing.
A level	GCE Advanced level, the most common Level 3 qualification taken by young people in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
A level only status	Indicates whether an applicant achieved only A levels, or a combination of A levels and other Level 3 qualifications.
Acceptance	An applicant who, at the end of the cycle, has been placed for entry into higher education.
Acceptance destination	Course or provider where an applicant is placed, in relation to their main scheme choices. For example, the acceptance destination of someone who used Clearing to secure a place at their original insurance choice would be 'Placed - insurance choice'.
Acceptance rate	The number of acceptances divided by the number of applicants. Acceptance rate is only calculated for a group of applicants when the number of applicants in the group is greater than or equal to 10.
Acceptance route	This is the route by which a placed applicant has been accepted.
Accepted applicant	See 'Acceptance'.
Adjusted accepted applicants	The number of acceptances multiplied by an inflation constant. The inflation constant is derived from the redistribution of acceptances with unknown values. See 'Entry rate' for more information.
Adjusted applicants	The number of applicants multiplied by an inflation constant. The inflation constant is derived from the redistribution of applicants with unknown values. See 'Application rate' for more information.
Adjustment	An acceptance route where applicants who have met or exceeded the conditions of their firm choice choose to take up an alternative offer.
Age	This statistical release uses country-specific age definitions which align with the cut off points for school/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 during the cycle reported (including applications for deferred entry). Records of prior acceptance (RPAs) are excluded.
Applicant	A person who has made an application in the UCAS system during the cycle reported (including applications for deferred entry). Counts of applicants include

	those applying through the main scheme, applicants who apply directly to Clearing, and Records of Prior Acceptance (RPAs).
Applicant status	A small number of applicant statuses vary between the 2021 DCA data and 2022 DCA data, as a result of a minor change to the dates at which some applicants' statuses are recorded.
Applicant status - Free to be placed in Clearing	An applicant who is not placed or holding an offer, and applied by 30 June. Applicants can move from this status to placed (Clearing).
Applicant status - Holding offer	An applicant who was holding an offer at 30 June which has a yet-to-be-resolved outcome. For example, a conditional firm (CF) for which the results are yet to be verified against the conditions.
Applicant status - Other (Direct to Clearing)	Applicants whose statuses could not be defined, because no decision had been recorded on their application at the point of reporting.
Applicant status - Placed (Adjustment)	An acceptance route where applicants who have met and exceeded the conditions of their firm choice choose to take up an alternative offer.
Applicant status - Placed (Clearing)	An acceptance route available late in the application cycle.
Applicant status - Placed (Direct to Clearing)	Applicants who register to apply after 30 June. Applicants cannot make parallel applications through this route – only one application will be active at a given point in time.
Applicant status - Placed (Firm)	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 requirements), or unconditional (these are assumed to be accepted/placed). In order to be defined as placed (firm), an applicant must have been placed at the provider with which they hold their firm choice at 30 June.
Applicant status - Placed (Insurance)	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). In order to be defined as placed (insurance), an applicant must have been placed at the provider with which they hold their insurance choice at 30 June.
Applicant status - Placed (Other)	Applicants in placed (other) include those for whom statuses could not be defined because no decision had been recorded on their application by 30 June.
Applicant with an offer	An applicant who has at least one main scheme choice where the provider has made them a conditional or unconditional offer.
Applicant with no applications	Applicants who do not submit an application. Typically, these are applicants who apply during Clearing, but do not submit an application to a provider.
Application	An application to a course at a provider made by an applicant in the UCAS main scheme. Applicants may make up to five main scheme applications.

Application deadline	The UCAS deadline by which an applicant submitted their main scheme application. This can be one of 15 October, 15 January, and 30 June, derived from the point in time that an application is first submitted.
Application rate	For a given country, the application rate is the percentage of the population who apply to higher education. Application rates are always reported for 18 year olds.
BTEC	Originally Business and Technician Education Council, BTECs are qualifications now offered by Pearson. These come in various sizes, with the Extended Diploma being the largest.
BTEC Extended diploma points	BTEC Extended diploma grade profiles are assigned points, such that PPP is one point, up to D*D*D* which is ten points, in order to create a quantifiable equivalent to the profile.
BTEC only status	Indicates whether an applicant achieved only BTECs, or a combination of BTECs and other Level 3 qualifications.
Care responsibility status	Declared care responsibility status.
Clearing	An acceptance route available from July through until mid-October.
Clearing Plus	A tool introduced in the 2020 cycle, which applicants can use to find tailored course matches in Clearing: https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing/what-clearing-plus
Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH)	<p>Developed to provide standard subject groupings that can be applied to both HECoS and JACS subjects: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos.</p> <p>In its public reporting, UCAS applies CAH to the (up to 5) HECoS subjects assigned by HEPs to their courses.</p> <p>When a course is assigned by a HEP to more than one HECoS subject, a proportion is assigned by the HEP to each HECoS subject to indicate the balance of the course. UCAS reports the sum of these proportions to indicate the number of applications/acceptances across CAH subject groups.</p>
Conditional firm offer	Offer which is conditional on 30 June, at an applicant's firm choice.
Conditional offer	Offers where certain conditions, usually related to the attainment of specific qualifications and examination results, which need to be satisfied for the applicant to be accepted onto a course.
Conditional unconditional offer	Offers which are conditional at the point of offer, and adjusted by the provider from conditional to unconditional if selected as an applicant's firm choice. These are identified in the admissions system through free text fields providers can use to communicate any additional information to applicants.
Country of provider	<p>An applicant may be counted once for each provider country they have applied to in the main scheme. If an applicant has applied to providers in multiple countries then the applicant is counted once within each country of provider applied to.</p> <p>This means that the total number of applicants is lower than the sum of applicants across the four countries of the UK.</p>
Decline	The decision by an applicant to decline an offer, and as such, not select it as either their firm or insurance choice.

Decline my place	Refers to the ability for anyone with a confirmed place to release themselves into Clearing online. This was first available in the 2019 cycle.
Deferred status	This indicates if an application is deferred. Most applications are into the academic year that starts immediately at the end of the cycle, for example into the 2019/20 academic year from the 2019 application cycle. Applications can also be deferred for entry into the following academic year, for example into the academic 2020/21 year from the 2019 cycle. These are called deferred applications.
Direct to Clearing	Where the applicant has applied through Clearing without an initial application through the main scheme (i.e. prior to the 30 June deadline).
Direct unconditional offer	Offers which are unconditional at the point of offer.
Disability and mental health	<p>Disability as declared on the application form by selecting from a list of available options. These options have been mapped as follows:</p> <p>No impairment (mapped from No disability)</p> <p>Social/behavioural/communication impairment (Autistic disorder)</p> <p>Visual impairment (Blind/partial sight)</p> <p>Hearing impairment (Deaf/partial hearing)</p> <p>Long-term illness/health condition (Long standing illness)</p> <p>Mental health condition/challenge/disorder (Mental health)</p> <p>Learning difference (Learning difficulty)</p> <p>Physical impairment/challenges with mobility (Wheelchair/mobility)</p> <p>Other condition/impairment (Other disability)</p> <p>Two or more impairments (Multiple disabilities)</p> <p>Unseen impairment (Unseen disability)</p> <p>Not known (Not known)</p>
Domicile	Declared area of permanent residence. Each country name and EU membership status is taken from the most recent year, and applied to all years. In reporting prior to 2019 EU membership status was allocated based on the year being analysed. The Channel Islands, Gibraltar and the Isle of Man have been assigned as 'Not EU'.
Entry rate	Number of acceptances from a UCAS application cycle divided by the estimated base population.
Entry rate ratio	Also called 'equality gap'. For a particular equality variable (e.g. POLAR4 quintile), this is the ratio of the entry rate of the group that is most likely to enter higher education (the 'advantaged' group in this context), to the entry rate of the group that is least likely to enter higher education (the 'disadvantaged' group in this context). The value of the entry rate ratio indicates how many times more likely

	the advantaged group is to enter higher education than the disadvantaged group. A value of 1 indicates the disadvantaged group is as likely to enter higher education as the advantaged group, and as such there is no 'equality gap' between the two groups. Examples of equality gaps are the 'POLAR4 equality gap', which is the entry rate ratio of POLAR4 quintile 5 to POLAR4 quintile 1, and the 'gender equality gap', which is the entry rate ratio of women to men.
Estranged status	Declared estranged status.
Ethnic group	High level grouping of ethnic origin as declared by the applicant: 'Asian', 'Black', 'Mixed', 'White', 'Other', 'Unknown'.
Ethnic group	Grouping of ethnic origin as declared by the applicant.
Ethnic group - National Pupil Database	Grouping of ethnic origin as given in the National Pupil Database
Extra	An acceptance route where applicants holding no offers after using all five main scheme choices can make additional choices.
Firm choice	<p>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 assumed to be accepted or placed at the provider).</p> <p>As an acceptance route, this refers to where an applicant has been accepted to their first choice.</p>
First time applicant	An applicant that did not apply to the UCAS scheme in the previous cycle.
Free school meals (FSM)	A means-tested benefit that can be used as an indicator of low household income (source: National Pupil Database [NPD] and School Census, Department for Education).
FSM status	Declared Free School Meal (FSM) status.
Gender	Prior to 2015 applicants were asked to state their sex as part of their application. This was changed in 2015 with applicants asked to declare their gender. In the 2024 cycle an extended classification for gender was introduced. For the purposes of enabling a timeseries, and consistent with HESA's treatment of these values, the values used in these data refer to sex prior to 2015, and gender subsequently.
Grade increase status	Due to the cancellation of exams across the UK in 2020, the qualifications awarding process was different this year. Following ministerial announcements for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it was decided that students would receive either their 'centre assessment grade' (CAG) ('estimation' in Scotland) or their 'calculated grade' ('moderated result' in Scotland) – whichever was higher. Grade increase status indicates whether an applicant received an increased grade following the announcements.
Higher Education Classification System (HECoS)	A new subject coding system: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos
IB	International Baccalaureate Diploma.
Indices of Multiple Deprivation	The IMD2019, NIMDM2017, SIMD2012/2016/2020 and WIMD2019 variables are calculated by linking the home postcode supplied to UCAS as part of an applicant's application with the associated lower super output area. The Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory (August 2020 version) is used for this linking process. These lower super output areas are then linked to the relevant IMD2019,

	<p>NIMDM2017, SIMD2012/2016/2020 and WIMD2019 quintiles.</p> <p>The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2019 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of England, providing a relative measure of deprivation amongst small areas (lower layer super output area).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure for 2017 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Northern Ireland, providing a relative measure of deprivation amongst small areas (super output area).</p> <p>The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2016/2020 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland, providing a relative measure of deprivation among small areas (data zones). SIMD 2016 is applied to years 2017 to 2020. SIMD 2020 is applied for 2021 onwards.</p> <p>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Wales, providing a relative measure of deprivation among small areas (lower layer super output area).</p> <p>Updates in geographical classifications may result in small changes to the Indices of multiple deprivation quintile assignment of applicants between reporting cycles.</p>
Insurance choice	<p>An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their second choice, in case the conditions of their firm choice are not met. These can be either conditional (dependent on achieving specified requirements) or unconditional (no further requirements to be met).</p> <p>As an acceptance route, this refers to when an applicant has been accepted to their insurance choice.</p>
Intention to live at home	Indicates whether applicant intends to live at home during course. This is an application level variable - applicants can make 1 application to a course where they intend to live at home, and another application to another course where they do not intend to live at home.
JCQ results day	The day of publication of results from the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ), including GCE AS and A level results, and reformed BTEC results.
Level 3 qualifications	There are nine qualification levels in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Level 3 qualifications include A level, AS level, Applied General, International Baccalaureate diploma, and other qualifications specified here: https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels
Main scheme	The main UCAS Undergraduate application scheme through to which up to five course choices can be applied. This opens in September and closes to new applications on 30 June the following year.

Main scheme applicant	An applicant who applied in the main scheme. In reporting prior to 2019 this refers to the point in time that an applicant's 'live' application was submitted. In reporting from 2019 this is derived from the point in time of the first application submitted in a cycle by an applicant.
Main scheme application	An application made in UCAS main scheme.
Main scheme Clearing	As an acceptance route which refers to an applicant who has made an application before the 30 June deadline, and subsequently found a place through Clearing.
Midwifery applicant	An applicant who has made at least one application to a course that has been defined by the provider as having over a 50% composition in the CAH02-04-04 midwifery subject group.
Multiple equality measure (MEM)	MEM is UCAS' principal measure of equality. It brings together several equality dimensions, for which large differences in the probability of progression into higher education exist. These equality dimensions include gender, ethnic group, where people live (using the POLAR3 and IMD classifications), secondary education school type, and income background (as measured by whether a person was in receipt of free school meals).
Number of applications	The total count of course choices submitted by an applicant. In the main application scheme, an applicant can apply to up to five different courses.
Nursing applicant	An applicant who has made at least one application to a course that has been defined by the provider as having over a 50% composition in the CAH02-04 nursing and midwifery subject group (excluding subject groups CAH02-04-04 midwifery and CAH02-04-06 dental nursing).
Offer	Provider decision to grant a place to an applicant. May be subject to the applicant satisfying academic and/or other criteria.
Offer rate	The proportion of applications receiving an offer. Note that each applicant may make up to five applications in the main scheme.
Offer with an unconditional component	Identified as an other unconditional offer, a conditional unconditional offer, or a direct unconditional offer.
Other unconditional offer	Offer which is conditional at the point of offer and becomes unconditional before June 30 – the final date on which main scheme applications can be submitted, and is not identified as conditional unconditional.
Parent in UK armed forces status	Declared parent in UK armed forces status.
Parental responsibility status	Declared parental responsibility status.
Placed applicant	See 'Acceptance'.
POLAR4	<p>Developed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), POLAR4 classifies small areas across the UK into five groups according to their level of young participation in higher education. 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).</p> <p>POLAR4 is based on the participation rates of young people between 2006 and 2011, who entered higher education between 2009-10 and 2014-15. It is,</p>

	therefore, most suitable for applicants aged 19 and under. These groups are assigned using the postcode declared by the applicant at the time of their application. Updates in geographical classifications may result in small changes to the POLAR4 quintile assignment of applicants between reporting cycles.
Population estimate	The population estimates are based on Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates, and national population projections (published in June 2019). For 16 to 20 year olds, the estimates are obtained by ageing 15 year olds from the appropriate number of years earlier. This approach avoids the estimates being susceptible to changes in net migration (including overseas students) during these ages. Older ages are obtained from the midyear estimates and national population projections without ageing. In both cases, the estimates are adjusted from age at mid-year to age on the country-specific reference dates, using the monthly distribution of births. Analysis of application and entry rates by area-based background are supported through small area population estimates, available from the Office for National Statistics, National Records for Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency. These small area population estimates have been revised to be consistent with the national level population estimates.
Predicted A level points	When an applicant applies with pending A levels, their school or college submits predicted grades. A level grades are assigned points, such that A* is six points, A is five, B is four, C is three, D is two, and E is one. Predicted A level grade profiles of applicants are assigned the total number of points of their best three predicted grades – for example, a grade profile of AAB would be worth 14 points.
Predicted BTEC Extended diploma points	When an applicant applies with pending BTECs, their school or college submits predicted grades. BTEC Extended diploma grade profiles are assigned points, such that PPP is one point, up to D*D*D* which is ten points, in order to create a quantifiable equivalent to the profile.
Provider	A higher education provider – a university or college. The provider is reported as at the time of the application. This does not take into account any mergers or rebrands, for example if Provider A and Provider B merged to become Provider A in 2016, all applications and acceptances will be reported as Provider A from 2016 onwards. Prior to 2016 all applications and acceptances will be reported as Provider A or Provider B as appropriate.
Provider tariff group	The grouping of providers based on the average levels of attainment of their UK 18 year old accepted applicants (summarised through UCAS Tariff points) in recent cycles. The groups are higher tariff, medium tariff, and lower tariff. Each group of providers accounted for around a third of all UK 18 year old acceptances in recent cycles.
Qualification group	<p>The combination of common qualifications held by an applicant, with the following groupings:</p> <p>A level Only (With extended project) - when an applicant achieves at least 3 A level grades A*-E with an extended project, without achieving any BTEC, SQA, IB, WB/ASBW, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>A level Only (Without extended project) - when an applicant achieves at least 3 A level grades A*-E without an extended project, without achieving any BTEC, SQA, IB, WB/ASBW, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications.</p>

	<p>BTEC Only - when an applicant achieves at least 3 BTECs, without achieving any A level, SQA, IB, WB/ASBW, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>A level & BTEC - when an applicant achieves a total of at least 3 BTECs and A level grades A*-E, without achieving any SQA, IB, WB/ASBW, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>SQA Only - when an applicant achieves at least 1 SQA, without achieving any A level, BTEC, IB, WB/ASBW, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>IB Only - when an applicant achieves at least 1 IB, without achieving any A level, BTEC, SQA, WB/ASBW, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>A level & WB/ASBW - when an applicant achieves a total of at least 3 WB/ASBW and A level grades A*-E, without achieving any BTEC, SQA, IB, Cambridge Technical or Access to HE qualifications. In 2023, the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (ASBW) replaced the Welsh Baccalaureate (WB) with 2025 being the first cycle applicants will have achieved it.</p> <p>Cambridge Technicals Only - when an applicant achieves at least 1 Cambridge Technical, without achieving any A level, BTEC, SQA, IB, WB/ASBW or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>Access to HE Only - when an applicant achieves at least 1 Access to HE qualification, without achieving any A level, BTEC, SQA, IB, WB/ASBW or Cambridge Technical qualifications.</p> <p>A level & Cambridge Technical - when an applicant achieves a total of at least 3 Cambridge Technical and A level grades A*-E, without achieving any BTEC, SQA, IB, WB/ASBW or Access to HE qualifications.</p> <p>Other - any other combination of the above qualifications, or combinations of other qualifications.</p>
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	Qualifications which are submitted to UCAS by Awarding Bodies are included.
Reapplicant	An applicant that applied to the UCAS scheme in the previous cycle.
Record of Prior Acceptance (RPA)	Where an application is submitted to UCAS by an institution when an unconditional firm offer has already been offered and accepted by the applicant.
Reformed BTEC indicator	Indicates whether an applicant was predicted to achieve or achieved a reformed BTEC or non-reformed BTEC.
Refugee and asylum seeker status	Declared refugee and asylum seeker status.
Reply	Applicant response to any offers received – this could be firm, insurance, or decline.
School type	The secondary school type the applicant applied from. The school type of each school is taken from the year of application.
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)	Qualification regulator and awarding body in Scotland.
Served in UK armed forces status	Declared served in UK armed forces status.
SQA points	SQA grades are assigned points, such that A is four points, B is three, C is two, and D is one.
SQA results day	The day of publication of results from the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA).
Teacher training applicant	An applicant who has made at least one application to a course that has a postgraduate teacher training outcome qualification.
TUNDRA	<p>Developed by the Office for Students (OfS), TUNDRA (tracking underrepresentation by area) is an area-based measure that uses tracking of state-funded mainstream school pupils in England to calculate young participation. It is an official statistic.</p> <p>TUNDRA classifies local areas across England into five equal groups – or quintiles - based on the proportion of 16 year old state-funded mainstream school pupils who participate in higher education aged 18 or 19 years.</p> <p>Quintile one shows the lowest rate of participation. Quintile five shows the highest rate of participation.</p> <p>TUNDRA MSOA uses Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) as the definition of local area, and TUNDRA LSOA uses Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) as the definition of local area. TUNDRA LSOA is in use in this release.</p> <p>Updates in geographical classifications may result in small changes to the TUNDRA quintile assignment of applicants between reporting cycles.</p>

UK region	<p>Government Office Region – the highest tier of sub-national division in England. In reports published prior to 2019, GOR was derived from an applicant's declared county of residence. From 2019, consistent with other sub-national geographies reported, this value is derived from an applicant's postcode.</p> <p>The postcode derived variable is used on the dashboard.</p> <p>Updates in geographical classifications may result in small changes to the UK region assignment of applicants between reporting cycles.</p>
UK region (derived from declared county of residence)	<p>Government Office Region – the highest tier of sub-national division in England. Derived from an applicant's county of residence.</p> <p>This is only available in csv files underneath the dashboard.</p>
Unconditional firm offer	<p>Offer which is unconditional on 30 June, at an applicant's firm choice.</p>