

Interim assessment of UCAS acceptances by intended entry year, country of institution and qualifications held

UCAS

(2014 cycle, 4 weeks
after A level results)

UCAS Analysis and Research
23 September 2014

Summary

This analysis reports UCAS acceptances by intended academic year of entry between the entry years of 2011-12 and 2014-15.

Reporting acceptances by the academic year they are recruited to, rather than by the UCAS admissions cycle in which they were accepted, is a better guide to the change in the number of those starting higher education in a particular academic year.

These statistics reflect the position recorded exactly four weeks after GCE A level results day. Acceptances at this point are usually around 98 per cent of the eventual end of cycle totals over recent cycles. For entry into 2013-14 there was a net increase of 10,896 (+2 per cent) between this point and the end of the 2013 cycle.

The number of acceptances by entry year at this point can differ from the final number of higher education enrolments recorded on statistical returns. This can be due to a number of factors that can vary in their effect from year to year.

Recruitment of students from all domiciles by entry year

- Acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year at this point are 499,730.
- This is an increase of 18,600 (4 per cent) compared to the 2013-14 entry year (at the equivalent point in the 2013 cycle).
- Acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year are 13 per cent more than to 2012-13 and around the same level (+910) as for 2011-12.
- The total increase of 18,600 to the 2014-15 entry year (compared to the 2013-14 entry year) is split as an increase of 17,270 in acceptances to enter HE immediately and an increase of 1,330 in deferred entry (from the previous cycle)
- By country of institution, acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year, and change compared to the 2013-14 entry year:

England:	422,020, +16,240 (+4 per cent)
Northern Ireland:	11,060, +190 (+2 per cent)
Scotland:	41,910, +1,440 (+4 per cent)
Wales:	24,750, +730 (+3 per cent)

- The six largest (numerically) changes by domicile group and institution country are:
 - English domiciled to English institutions, +12,560 (+4 per cent)
 - EU (excluding UK) domiciled to English institutions, +1,530 (+8 per cent)
 - Not EU domiciled to English institutions, +1,450 (+5 per cent)
 - Wales domiciled to English institutions, +660 (+9 per cent)
 - Scotland domiciled to Scottish institutions, +560 (+2 per cent)
 - England domiciled to Scottish institutions, +460 (+11 per cent)

Recruitment of UK and EU students by entry year

- UK and EU acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year at this point are 461,510.
- This is an increase of 16,880 (4 per cent) compared to the 2013-14 entry year (at the equivalent point in the 2013 cycle).
- Acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year are 13 per cent more than to 2012-13 and 1 per cent lower than to 2011-12.
- UK and EU acceptances to the 2014-15 entry year (and change compared to the 2013-14 entry year) by country of institution are:

England:	388,830, +14,800 (+4 per cent)
Northern Ireland:	10,800, +150 (+1 per cent)
Scotland:	38,580, +1,210 (+3 per cent)
Wales:	23,310, +710 (+3 per cent)

Recruitment of UK and EU students to English institutions by entry year and qualification level

- UK and EU domiciled acceptances into the 2014-15 entry year at institutions and subject areas approximated to be subject to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) student number control arrangements ('SNC courses') are 344,240 at this point.
- This is an increase of 9,820 (3 per cent) compared to acceptances into the 2013-14 entry year (at the equivalent point in the previous cycle).
- Students on these courses may be exempt from the number control arrangements if they hold certain qualifications. The definition of this exempt 'ABB+' group has changed from year to year. This analysis reports changes in recruitment by a fixed group of qualifications that approximates the 'ABB+' grouping in effect for 2013-14. This grouping is common for each entry year reported so that trends in students with a particular attainment level can be seen.
- For 'SNC courses', UK and EU domiciled acceptances into the 2014-15 entry year:
Not recorded as holding entry qualifications in the 'ABB+' set:
227,340, +7,190 (+3 per cent)
Recorded as holding entry qualifications in the 'ABB+' set:
116,890, +2,630 (+2 per cent)
of which:
 holding GCE A levels
 75,750, -2,500 (-3 per cent)
 holding BTECs
 34,580, +4,840 (+16 per cent)
- Within these 'SNC courses' for 2014-15, 34 per cent are recorded as holding entry qualifications in the 'ABB+' set.
- For other courses at these institutions there are 39,140 UK and EU domiciled acceptances to 2014-15 at this point. This is an increase of 2,810 (+8 per cent) compared to 2013-14 at the equivalent point in the 2013 cycle.

How to read these tables

Reporting by entry year compared to reporting by UCAS cycle

UCAS acceptances can be reported by the academic year that they intend to start their course ('entry year') rather than by the UCAS cycle from which they are accepted. Reporting acceptances in this way, rather than by the UCAS cycle in which they were accepted, is a better guide to the likely number of students starting higher education courses at UCAS higher education providers in an academic year.

This is important when using UCAS statistics as an indicator of likely changes in students starting courses over recent years as it takes account of the substantial changes in the proportion of UCAS acceptances who defer their entry to higher education (that is, intend to start their course after a year rather than immediately).

In particular, the number and proportion of acceptances who deferred their entry in the 2011 cycle was lower than usual. Compared to the UCAS cycle totals, this meant that the number of acceptances into the 2011-12 entry year was relatively high compared to the UCAS cycle totals for 2011 since a greater proportion of those acceptances entered immediately, whilst the number of deferred acceptances into 2011-12 from the 2010 cycle was at a typical level (29,250 acceptances).

The lower number of deferred acceptances from the 2011 cycle into the 2012-13 entry year (13,210 acceptances), combined with a partial return in the 2012 cycle to more typical levels of deferred acceptances (24,190 acceptances at the end of the cycle) means that the change in acceptances recorded by entry years differs substantially from that recorded by UCAS cycle over these two years. It is these patterns that account for the differences between these figures and the usual UCAS cycle-based acceptances. There is a similar but smaller effect when comparing changes to 2014-15, resulting from the reduced deferred component from 2011 to 2012-13.

UCAS acceptances can differ from eventual total higher education entrants, even when counted by entry year, due to a range of factors. These include not all acceptances going on to enrol and some enrolments not coming through UCAS, and these factors and their extent can vary from year to year.

Coverage and structure of analysis tables

The analysis tables in the release, report the number of acceptances into entry year 2014-15 in the context of the totals for entry into 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 at equivalent points in the relevant UCAS cycle. To ensure a consistent comparison through time the tables do not include a small number (several thousand) of acceptances to courses which start within a cycle.

The reference point for these statistics is four weeks after the release of GCE A level results (11 September 2014 and the equivalent point in previous cycles). Total acceptances at this point are around 98 per cent of the end of cycle totals over recent cycles. For providers in Scotland and Wales the proportion of end of cycle total acceptances recorded at this point is typically lower (around 95 per cent). The

table below shows the change in acceptances between the reporting point 28 days after GCE A level results day and the end of 2013 cycle.

Institution country	2013-14 entry year acceptances 28 days after GCE A level results day	2013-14 entry year acceptances at end of cycle	2013-14 entry year change from day 28 to end of cycle	2013-14 entry year percentage change from day 28 to end of cycle
England	405,780	413,300	7,520	2%
Northern Ireland	10,870	10,930	60	1%
Scotland	40,460	42,640	2,180	5%
Wales	24,020	25,160	1,140	5%
Total	481,130	492,030	10,900	2%

There are two sets of analysis tables. The first set (Tables 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d) report acceptances by country of institution and country of domicile.

The second set (Tables 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d) provide a further analysis of UCAS providers in England by categories that relate to arrangements for controlling student numbers for entry into 2014-15. These are based on the details of the course the applicant is accepted to and an assessment of their entry qualifications. They approximate the categories that relate to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) student number control arrangements from information recorded in the UCAS system. A common approximation is applied to all entry years for the purpose of comparison. Some examples of the factors which contribute to these being approximations are: acceptances through UCAS do not cover all courses subject to these arrangements; to enable point in time comparisons these numbers do not include a small number of acceptances to courses which start within a cycle; a small number of qualification types (eg Access to HE) have not been assessed against the ABB+ categories for technical reasons; and combinations of qualifications included in the ABB+ categories in 2014-15 have not been assessed.

The assessment of entry qualifications uses a number of data sources including information provided by applicants themselves. For acceptances that meet the ABB+ categories from GCE A level qualifications, these are split into those that meet the ABB+ categories from qualifications awarded solely within the cycle of application (information provided by the awarding bodies), and those that meet the ABB+ categories at least partly, and in some cases solely, using qualifications awarded prior to the cycle of application (information provided by the applicants). The other ABB+ categories are assessed against the qualification information provided by the awarding bodies for qualifications awarded in the year of application in combination with information provided by the applicants relating to qualifications awarded prior to application. The ABB+ criteria can be met solely through the awarding bodies

information, in combination with applicant supplied information or through the applicant supplied information alone.

The institutions reported as those with HEFCE-funded provision are those identified by HEFCE for 2014-15. This constant grouping is used for all reported years. The institutions in England not in this set are reported as 'Other English institutions'.

There are four parts to each set of tables. The first (a) gives the accepted applicant totals to each entry year. The second (b) reports these as the change between the 2014-15 entry year acceptances and acceptances into earlier entry years (reported so that where the 2014-15 entry year acceptances are lower than the comparison entry year acceptances the statistic reported will be negative). This shows directly whether recruitment to 2014-15 is higher or lower than the reference year chosen. The third (c) reports this same statistic as a proportional change from the comparison entry year.

The fourth table (d) splits the acceptances for each entry year by the UCAS cycle that the acceptance was from. So, for example, the acceptances into the 2014-15 entry year are split into whether they were accepted from the 2014 cycle ('immediate acceptances') or from the 2013 cycle ('deferred acceptances'). To give the best picture of acceptances across the 2011-12 to 2014-15 entry years, the deferred acceptances into those entry years are reported using the end of cycle position. This is not possible yet for the deferred acceptances from 2014 into 2015-16, who are reported instead at the reference point. This means that deferred acceptances into 2015-16 are likely to change by the end of the cycle whereas the deferred acceptances into other entry years will not. Last year, deferred acceptances to 14-15 increased by 2,900 between this point and the end of the cycle.

All tables show acceptances and differences rounded to the nearest 10. Proportional changes are not shown for smaller domicile to country of institution flows (where the base is fewer than 500).