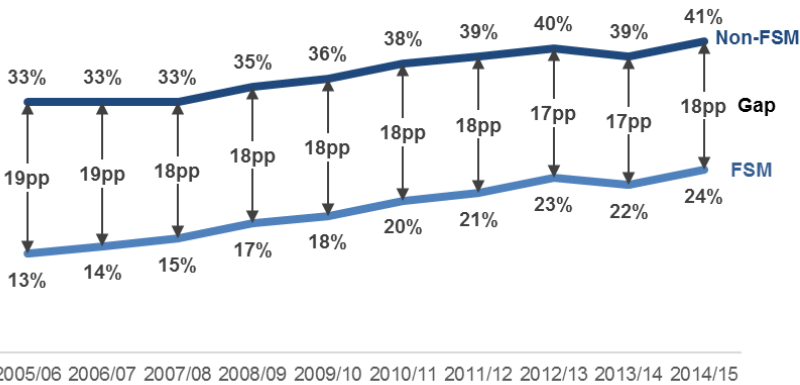




SFR 39/2017, 03 August 2017

The progression rate of FSM pupils has increased but so has the gap between FSM and non-FSM

Estimated percentage of 15 year old state-funded pupils by FSM status who entered HE by age 19



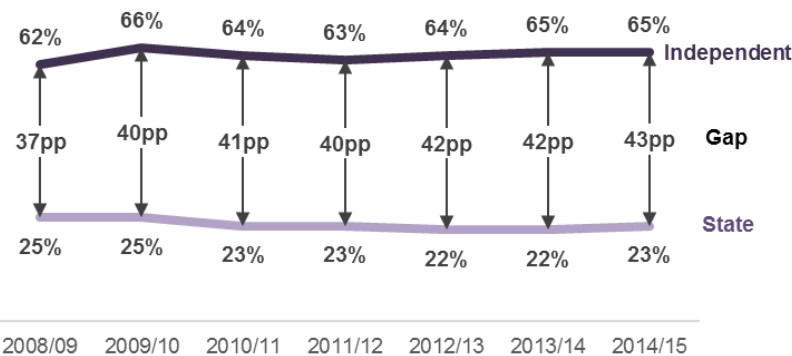
An estimated 24% of pupils who were in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) aged 15 entered Higher Education by age 19 by 2014/15. This compares to 41% of non-FSM pupils. The gap in progression rates between FSM and non-FSM pupils rose slightly, from 17 to 18 percentage points between 2013/14 and 2014/15. The gap has varied between 17 and 19 percentage points since 2005/06.

The 2014/15 cohort includes those who entered Higher Education aged 18 in 2013/14 or aged 19 in 2014/15.

Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

The gap in progression rates by school type to the most selective HEIs has increased

Estimated percentage of A level and equivalent students who progressed to the most selective HE providers by age 19 by school/college type



An estimated 65% of students who took A level and equivalent qualifications in independent schools and colleges progressed to the most selective Higher Education providers by age 19 by the 2014/15 academic year, compared to 23% of those from state-funded schools and colleges. The most selective are defined as the top third of Higher Education providers when ranked by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrants.

The gap between state and independent rates has increased slightly from 42 to 43 percentage points between the 2013/14 and 2014/15 cohorts. This is despite some improvement in the rate for state schools/colleges in 2014/15.

Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

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About this release

This Official Statistics Release includes the latest information on three measures of Widening Participation in Higher Education:

- The estimated percentage of 15 year olds, by Free School Meals (FSM) status, who progressed to Higher Education (HE) by age 19 by 2014/15. The information is presented at national, regional and local authority level.
- The estimated percentage of A level and equivalent students, by school/college type, who progressed to HE and to the most selective Higher Education Providers by age 19 by 2014/15.
- Estimated proportions of young 2015/16 graduates in different occupation classifications by social background on entry to HE. This uses Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) at both points, split into two groups (Most Advantaged/Less Advantaged).

The FSM measure covers pupils from English state-funded schools and special schools who have progressed to HE in UK Higher Education Providers and English Further Education Colleges. The school type measure covers pupils from English schools and colleges who have progressed to HE in UK Higher Education Providers. The measure on graduate outcomes covers English domiciled graduates from UK Higher Education Providers. The first two measures use matched data which takes longer to become available than the sources used for the graduate outcomes measure. Figures from matched data should be considered as estimates. Pupils progressing to alternative providers are excluded from this publication.

These measures are intended to contribute to the understanding of widening participation issues as part of a range of measures. Section 5 provides information on some of the other measures available.

There have been some small revisions to the methodology and previously released figures to improve the accuracy of the measures. More details can be found in the accompanying Technical Note.

This publication updates the previous release of August 2016.

[Widening Participation in Higher Education 2016](#)

In this publication

The following tables are included in the release:

- Table 1 Progression to Higher Education by Free School Meal status (Excel .xls)
- Table 2 Progression to Higher Education by Free School Meal status by Local Authority (Excel .xls)
- Table 3 Progression to Higher Education/Most Selective Higher Education by school type (Excel .xls)
- Table 4 Graduate outcomes by social background (Excel .xls)
- Table 5 Other Widening Participation measures (Excel .xls)

The accompanying Technical Note document provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at HE.statistics@education.gov.uk

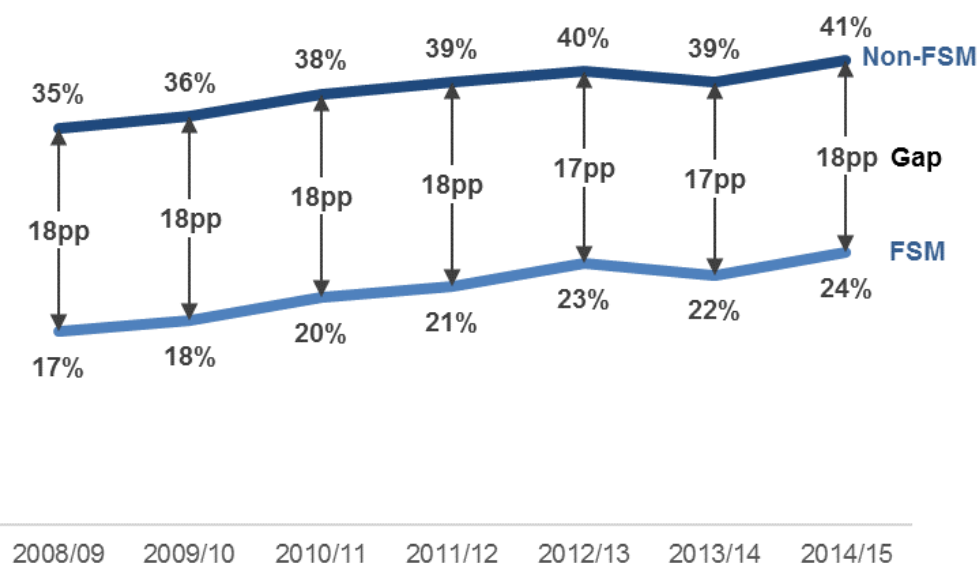
1. Progression to Higher Education by Free School Meal status

Figure 1 shows that an estimated 17% of state-funded and special school pupils who received Free School Meals (FSM) at age 15 entered Higher Education by age 19 by 2008/09. This rose steadily to an estimated 24% for the 2014/15 cohort, following a small reduction in 2013/14. The estimated progression rate for pupils not receiving Free School Meals has risen from 35% for the 2008/09 cohort to 41% for the 2014/15 cohort, also following a small reduction in 2013/14. The estimated gap between FSM and Non-FSM progression rates was 18 percentage points for the 2014/15 cohort, an increase from 17 percentage points for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 cohorts but the same as earlier cohorts.

Figure 1: Estimated percentage of 15 year old state-funded and special school pupils by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19

Academic Years 2008/09 to 2014/15

UK Higher Education Providers and English Further Education Colleges



Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record and SFA Individualised Learner Record (ILR)

Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

Methodology Changes

There have been some small revisions to the methodology to improve the accuracy of this measure. These changes have had limited impact on the figures. More details can be found in the accompanying Technical Note.

Prior attainment

Prior attainment is not accounted for in this measure. Many pupils will not continue their education after Key Stage 4 and therefore may not hold the qualifications to progress to Higher Education. See Technical Note for more details.

Free School Meal eligibility

An estimated 14% of all 15 year old pupils were in receipt of Free Schools Meals. This proportion has remained between 12% to 14% over the past six years. See Technical Note for more details.

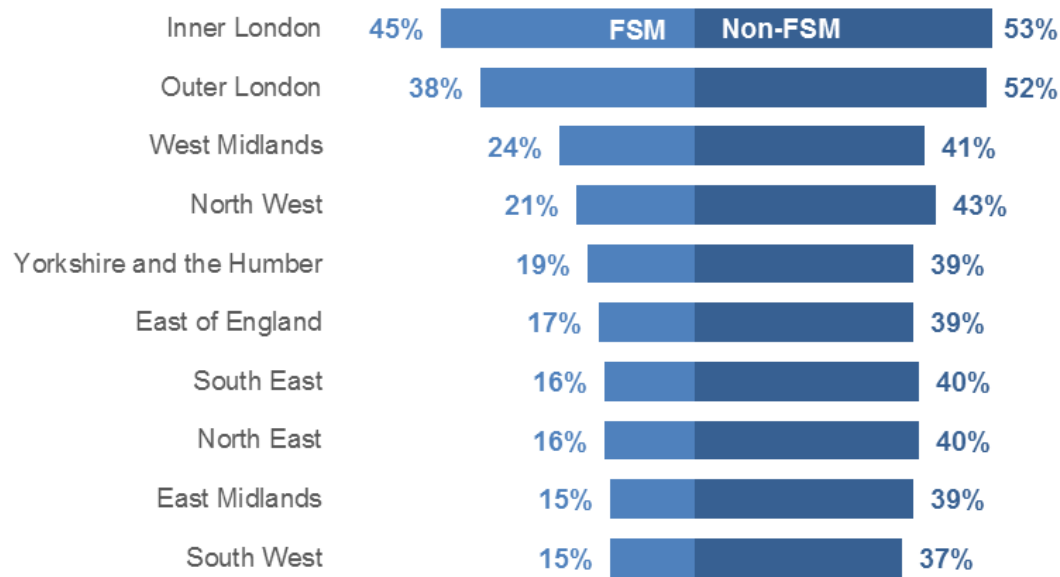
2. Progression to Higher Education by Free School Meal status by Region

Progression to Higher Education varies significantly by region, in particular for those eligible for Free School Meals. Figure 2 shows that 45% of those eligible for Free School Meals at age 15 in Inner London progressed to HE by age 19 – a rate three times higher than for the South West and the East Midlands (15%). London also has the highest progression rates for those not eligible for Free School Meals at age 15 – over 50% in both Inner London (53%) and Outer London (52%). The South West has the lowest progression rate of 37%.

Figure 2: Estimated percentage of 15 year old state-funded and special school pupils by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19 by region

Academic Year 2014/15

UK Higher Education Providers and English Further Education Colleges



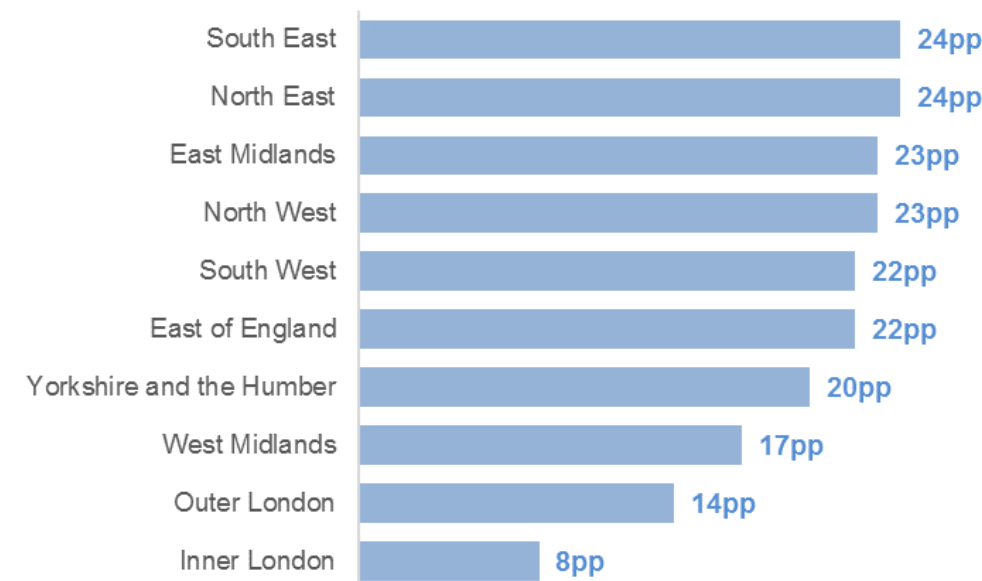
Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, HESA Student Record and SFA ILR

The gap between progression rates between those eligible for Free School Meals at age 15 and those who were not eligible also varies by region. Figure 3 shows that the gap is lowest for Inner London at 8 percentage points, followed by Outer London at 14 percentage points and the West Midlands at 17 percentage points. The South East and the North East show the largest gaps in the progression rates at 24 percentage points.

Figure 3: Estimated gap in progression to HE between 15 year old state-funded and special school pupils eligible for Free School Meals and those not eligible by age 19 by region

Academic Year 2014/15

UK Higher Education Providers and English Further Education Colleges



Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, HESA Student Record and SFA ILR

An Excel table associated with this publication on the webpage gives a time series of the local authority level information.

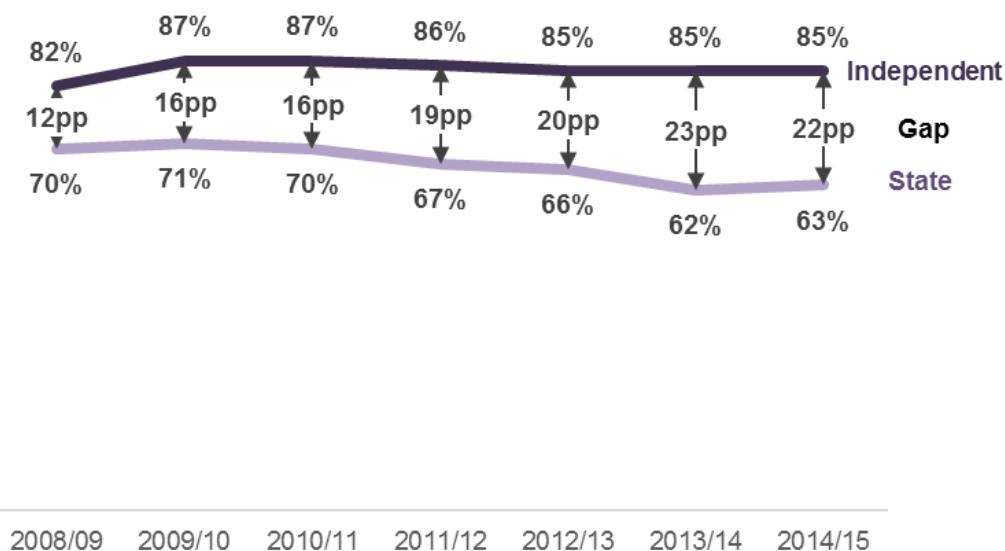
Care should be taken when comparing progression rates across regions. In particular, it is not possible to conclude that the gaps in progression rates shown are a reflection of the performance of educational institutions in those regions. This is because the composition of the Non-FSM group (and to a lesser extent the FSM group) will vary considerably in terms of levels of affluence and other factors that will impact on educational attainment and progression. The proportion of pupils with FSM varies considerably between regions.

3. Progression to Higher Education/Most Selective Higher Education by school type

An estimated 63% of those who studied A level and equivalent qualifications in state schools and colleges at age 17 in 2012/13 progressed to Higher Education by age 19 by 2014/15. This is up from 62% for the 2013/14 cohort but remains below the progression rates for the 2008/09 to 2012/13 cohorts. For independent school and college pupils the estimated progression rate was 85%. The gap between these progression rates has risen from 12 percentage points for the 2008/09 cohort to 22 percentage points for the 2014/15 cohort. However, the gap fell from 23 percentage points for the 2013/14 cohort.

Figure 4: Estimated percentage of A level and equivalent students who entered HE by age 19, by independent and state school/college

Academic Years 2008/09 to 2014/15



Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, HESA Student Record and SFA ILR

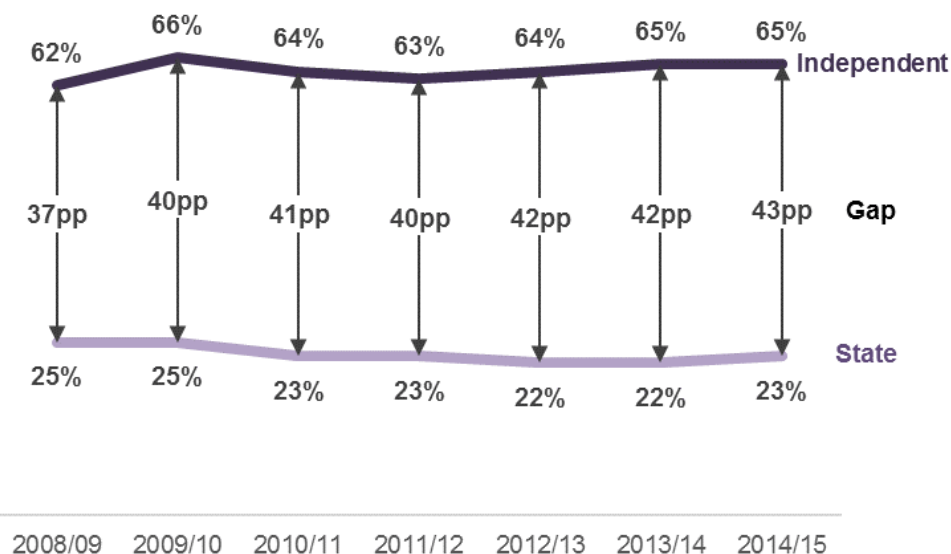
Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

Methodology Changes

There have been some small revisions to the methodology to improve the accuracy of this measure. These changes have had limited impact on the figures. More details can be found in the accompanying Technical Note.

The estimated progression rate for state school and college pupils to the most selective Higher Education Providers was 23% for the 2014/15 cohort, up from 22% from the previous cohort. The equivalent progression rate for independent school and college pupils was 65% for the 2014/15 cohort, the same as the previous cohort. The most selective are defined as the top third of HEPs when ranked by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrants. The gap between state and independent progression rates to the most selective institutions for the 2014/15 cohort was 43 percentage points, up from 42 percentage points for the 2013/14 cohort.

Figure 5: Estimated percentage of A level and equivalent students who progressed to the most selective HE Providers by age 19, by independent and state school/college
Academic Years 2008/09 to 2014/15



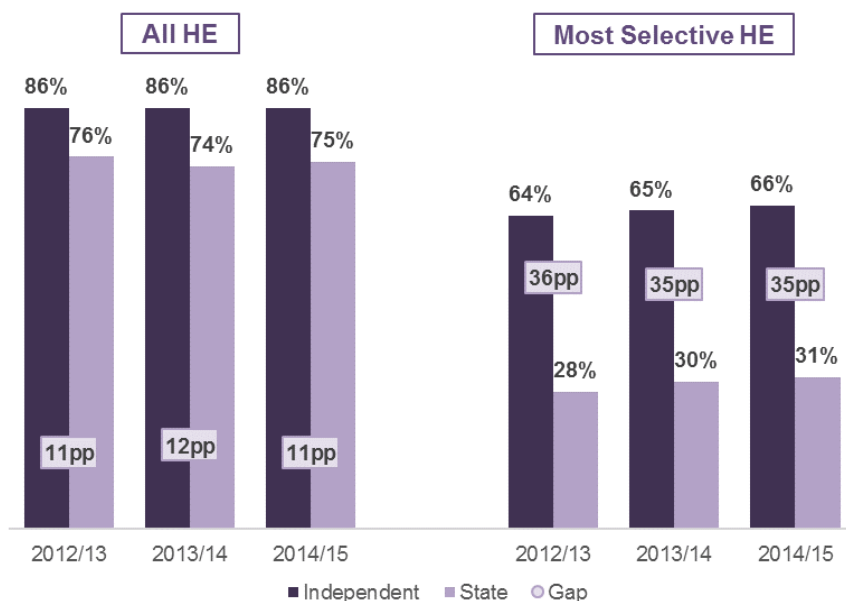
Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, HESA Student Record and SFA ILR

Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

When the analysis is restricted to those who took A levels only, the gap between independent and state-funded schools/colleges reduces.

Figure 6 shows that 86% of pupils who took A levels in Independent schools progressed to HE, 11 percentage points higher than for pupils in state-funded schools/colleges (75%). This gap is down from 12 percentage points in 2013/14. The gap remains large when focusing on those progressing to the most selective HEIs. An estimated 66% of pupils who took A level in Independent schools progressed to the most selective HEIs, 35 percentage points higher than those in state-funded schools/colleges (31%). This gap is the same as 2013/14 but down from 2012/13 (36 percentage points).

Figure 6: Estimated percentage of A level students who entered HE by age 19 and the percentage who progressed to the most selective HE Providers, by independent and state school/college
Academic Years 2010/11 to 2014/15



Source: Matched data from the DfE National Pupil Database, HESA Student Record and SFA ILR

Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

4. Graduate outcomes by social background

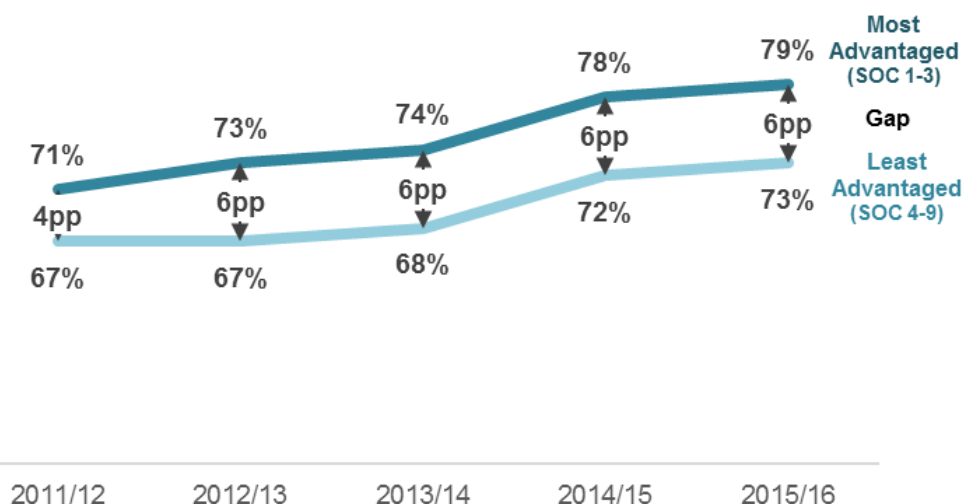
Figure 7 covers young first-degree graduates (aged 20 to 22 in their graduation year) in full-time employment six months after graduating. An estimated 79% of those from the most advantaged backgrounds before higher education were in the most advantaged occupational groups six months after graduating in 2015/16. This is up 1 percentage point from 2014/15. 73% of those from less advantaged backgrounds were in the most advantaged occupational groups, up 1 percentage point on the previous year.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) classifies jobs in terms of skill level and skill content. SOC 1 to 3 is sometimes used as a proxy for graduate level jobs or the most advantaged occupations. SOC 4 to 9 is used as a proxy for the least advantaged occupations.

The occupational group on entry to HE will often reflect the occupation of the student's parents. The employment group reflects the graduate's employment.

Figure 7: Percentage of graduates in full-time employment in the most advantaged occupations six months after graduating by occupational background on entry to Higher Education

English domiciled full-time first degree
Aged 20-22 in graduation year



Source: HESA Student Record and DLHE survey

Note: gap figures are calculated based on unrounded data and therefore may not correspond to the gap between rounded percentages. Figures are reported to the nearest percentage point therefore caution should be taken when making comparisons across years.

Figures should be treated as estimates and considered to be broadly indicative rather than precise measures, due to data limitations.

A change to the UCAS question on occupation means that 2011/12 graduate figures are not directly comparable with other years.

The share of graduates entering Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) groups 1 to 3 occupations has increased over time with a more notable increase between 2013/14 and 2014/15. This increase was driven by graduates entering occupations classified as SOC group 2 ("Professional occupations"), which is dominated by professions such as teaching, nursing and medicine. The increase in 2014/15 is due to the relative share of graduates in these professions increasing because their student numbers remained stable in a year when the size of the wider graduation cohort reduced. **See Technical Note section 3 for more details.**

5. Other Widening Participation Measures

The measures given in the main body of this publication should be considered alongside other statistics on widening participation in Higher Education. Some other measures are described in the following section.

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS): End of cycle report 2016

UCAS released widening participation data in December 2016, including analysis of entry rates by POLAR and entry to higher tariff institutions:

[UCAS End of Cycle Reports.](#)

Entry rates give the number of students from England entering Higher Education via UCAS by age 19 as a proportion of the population of 18 year olds in England.

POLAR

Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) was developed by HEFCE and classifies small areas across the UK into five groups according to their level of young participation in HE. Each of these groups represents around 20 per cent of young people and are ranked from quintile 1 (Q1) (areas with the lowest young participation rates, considered as the most disadvantaged) to quintile 5 (Q5) (highest young participation rates, considered most advantaged). This has been updated over the years to POLAR2 and POLAR3.

Higher tariff institutions

UCAS grouped institutions into three groups based on their average level of attainment of their accepted applicants (summarised through UCAS tariff points) in recent cycles. Each group had around a third of all UK 18 year old acceptances in recent cycles. This measure covers the group of institutions with entrants with the highest attainment.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA): Performance Indicators in Higher Education

HESA has published *Performance Indicators in Higher Education* since 2002/03. The latest publication was released in February 2017 and is available from the HESA website:

[HESA Performance Indicators](#)

The Performance Indicators provide information about the proportion of entrants who are from state schools and low participation neighbourhoods and previously provided data on young peoples' socio-economic class. The indicator for state schools reflects the percentage of young, full-time entrants to first degrees in English Higher Education Institutions who had previously attended a school or college in the state sector. These measures differ from the widening participation measures as they focus on the composition of the HE student population rather than progression rates into HE.

Low Participation Neighbourhood

The Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN) indicator is the percentage of young, full-time entrants to first degree courses in English HEIs whose home area (as denoted by their postcode) is identified as being within Quintile 1 of the POLAR system. POLAR is described in the UCAS entry above. POLAR2 (Participation of Local Area 2) data is not comparable with the more recent POLAR3 data.

Table 5 shows widening participation measures from these sources. It is important to note that these measures are not directly comparable, as there are differences in definitions, coverage and data sources.

Table 5: Widening participation in higher education – basket of measures

Measure	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Progression by age 19									
DfE									
Progression to HE									
by FSM status									
FSM	17%	18%	20%	21%	23%	22%	24%	..	..
Non-FSM	35%	36%	38%	39%	40%	39%	41%	..	..
Gap (pp)	18	18	18	18	17	17	18	..	..
UCAS									
Young (18-19) cohort entry									
rates POLAR3 ^{[1][2]}									
Disadvantaged (Q1)	17.1%	18.6%	19.7%	20.7%	21.2%	22.2%	23.9%	25.3%	26.0%
Advantaged (Q5)	55.9%	57.2%	57.8%	57.5%	57.0%	56.2%	57.7%	59.8%	59.4%
Gap (pp)	38.8	38.6	38.1	36.8	35.8	34.0	33.8	34.5	33.4
All ^[3]	35.0%	36.5%	37.3%	38.1%	38.2%	38.7%	40.5%	42.1%	42.5%
Entry at age 18									
UCAS									
Entry rates state									
school pupils ^[4]									
FSM	10.8%	11.6%	11.5%	13.0%	12.7%	13.6%	14.7%	15.9%	16.1%
Non-FSM	26.3%	27.2%	27.4%	28.4%	27.3%	29.3%	30.5%	31.5%	32.8%
Gap (pp)	15.5	15.6	15.9	15.4	14.6	15.7	15.8	15.6	16.7
Entry rates POLAR3 ^{[2][5]}									
Disadvantaged (Q1)	12.9%	13.6%	14.2%	15.1%	15.1%	16.4%	17.8%	18.5%	19.5%
Advantaged (Q5)	42.3%	42.4%	41.8%	44.4%	41.7%	43.0%	44.4%	44.9%	46.3%
Gap (pp)	29.4	28.8	27.6	29.3	26.6	26.6	26.6	26.4	26.8
Entry rates to									
higher tariff inst. ^{[2][6]}									
Disadvantaged (Q1)	2.5%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.6%	2.9%	3.2%	3.3%	3.6%
Advantaged (Q5)	19.6%	18.8%	18.2%	17.9%	19.0%	19.8%	20.5%	20.7%	21.3%
Gap (pp)	17.1	16.4	15.8	15.5	16.4	16.9	17.4	17.4	17.7
Young (under 21) entry									
HESA Performance									
Indicators^[7]									
State Schools	88.0%	88.4%	88.2%	88.5%	89.0%	89.4%	89.6%	89.8%	..
Lower NS-SEC ^[8]	..	30.1%	30.7%	30.9%	32.8%	33.1%	33.4%	..	..
LPN (POLAR2) ^[2]	10.2%	10.5%	10.6%	10.7%	11.7%	11.7%	.	.	..
LPN (POLAR3) ^[2]	.	9.6%	10.0%	10.2%	10.9%	10.9%	11.3%	11.3%	..

. not applicable .. not available

[1] Young cohort entry rates (aged 18 or 19 on entry) by POLAR3 groups for England. The entry rates give students from England entering Higher Education via UCAS by age 19 as a proportion of the population of 18 year olds in England, based on ONS data. From Figure 53 of UCAS End of cycle report 2016. UCAS describe cohorts by the year when aged 18, rather than 19 as in this table, so figures are under different headings to those in the UCAS publication. Some figures have changed due to revised population estimates.

[2] Entry rates for Quintile 1 disadvantaged and Quintile 5 advantaged areas by POLAR. POLAR is an area based measure of educational disadvantage. The POLAR classification analyses the geographical variation in participation by grouping small areas across the UK according to their level of young HE participation.

[3] England young cohort entry rate from Figure 14 of UCAS End of cycle report 2016.

[4] Entry rates for English 18 year old state school pupils by Free School Meal (FSM) status at age 15. From UCAS data linked to DfE National Pupil Database data. From Figure 58 of UCAS End of cycle report 2016.

[5] English 18 year old entry rates by POLAR3 groups from Figure 52 of UCAS End of Cycle report 2016.

[6] English 18 year olds, entry rates (cycle) to higher tariff institutions by POLAR3 groups. The cycle entry rates give students entering Higher Education from a UCAS application cycle as a proportion of the base population, based on ONS population estimates. From figure 54 of the UCAS End of cycle report 2016. See source for definition of higher tariff institutions.

[7] Young full-time first degree UK domiciled students in Higher Education Institutions in England. For example 89.8% of entrants covered were from state schools in 2015/16. LPN refers to Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR Q1) using two definitions, the older POLAR2 and the more recent POLAR3 definition.

[8] National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification 4 to 7; comparable figures for 2008/09 are not available.

Destinations of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 pupils

DfE also produce destination measures showing the percentage of students progressing to further learning in a school, further education or sixth-form college, apprenticeship, work-based learning provider or higher education institution. The KS4 measure is based on activity at academic age 16 (i.e. the year after the young person finished compulsory schooling). The KS5 measure is based on activity in the year after the young person took their A Level or equivalent qualification/s.

The latest information is available from the GOV.UK website:

[Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Destinations](#)

Main differences between the KS5 destination measures and the progression to HE by school type measure in this Widening Participation in Higher Education (WPHE) publication:

- The DfE destinations figures cover those in the first year after KS5 exams, the WPHE figures are those entering HE by age 19. So these WPHE figures take into account those who took a gap year before entering Higher Education at age 19.
- Destinations figures cover those entered for A levels or equivalent qualifications at ages 16 to 18 (at the start of the academic year), WPHE figures cover those studying A levels or equivalent qualifications aged 17 at the start of the academic year.
- Destinations figures cover only those who stayed in the education destination (in this case HE) for at least the first two terms, WPHE covers all entrants except those who dropped out in the first two weeks.

The latest destinations publication shows that 49% of KS5 leavers progressed to HE in 2014/15, 20% to the most selective HE. As we would expect, the WPHE measures show higher proportions, as WPHE look at progression by age 19, rather than the year after KS5. WPHE figures show 65% of A level and equivalent students progressed to HE by age 19, with 27% to the most selective.

The KS5 destination Free School Meal (FSM) measure covers those KS5 leavers who had Free School Meals in year 11 (generally aged 15 at the start of the year). This shows 43% of KS5 students who had FSM progressed to HE in 2014/15, compared to 49% for non-FSM. The WPHE measure that looks at progression by FSM status is very different because it covers all 15 year olds, not just those who go on to complete KS5. It shows that 15 year old pupils with FSM are substantially less likely to progress to Higher Education than non-FSM pupils, whereas the destination measures publication suggests that for KS5 pupils the progression rates are much closer.

6. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics [website](#):

National and local authority tables

- 1 Estimated percentage of 15 year old pupils from state-funded and special schools by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19
- 2 Estimated percentage of 15 year old pupils from state-funded and special schools by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19 by local authority
- 2a Estimated percentage of 15 year old pupils from state-funded and special schools by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19 by local authority – time series
- 3a Estimated number and percentage of A level and equivalent students who entered HE by age 19 and the percentage who progressed to the most selective HE Institutions, by independent and state school/college
- 3b Estimated percentage of A level and equivalent students who entered HE by age 19 and the percentage who progressed to the most selective HE Institutions, by independent and state school/college
- 3c Estimated number and percentage of A level students who entered HE by age 19 and the percentage who progressed to the most selective HE Institutions, by independent and state school/college
- 4 English domiciled full-time first degree graduates in full-time employment six months after graduating: estimated percentages for Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) on entry to Higher Education and in employment
- 5 Widening participation in higher education - basket of measures
- A Estimated number and percentage of 15 year old pupils from state-funded and special schools by Free School Meal status who entered HE by age 19
- B Estimated mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A-level grades of entrants to each Higher Education Institution (HEI) by age 19

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

Tables 1 and 2 Progression to Higher Education by Free School Meal status

- There may be pupils who are eligible for FSM but do not claim for a number of reasons. Such pupils will not be classified as in receipt of FSM for the purposes of this measure.
- Pupils may have claimed FSM in earlier school years, but not when age 15. Such pupils will not be recorded as in receipt of FSM in this measure.
- May include a small amount of double counting where pupils attend more than one school.
- This measure only tracks entry to HE by age 19. A number of pupils may enter HE at a later age and are not included in this measure.
- Prior attainment is not accounted for in this measure. Many pupils will not continue their education; therefore will not hold the qualifications to progress to HE.
- Due to the matching procedures deployed, all figures in this measure should be treated as estimates.

Tables 3a,3b and 3c Progression to Higher Education by school type

- Prior attainment is not accounted for in this measure. Many pupils may not achieve the required Level 3 qualifications to progress to HE.
- Due to the matching procedures deployed, all figures in this measure should be treated as estimates.

Also please note the details in the Technical Note.

7. Further information is available

- A detailed Technical Note is published alongside this publication.
- Previously published figures are also available from the same website.
- Section 5 gives details of some other sources of information on Widening Participation

8. Official Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as Official Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as Official Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

9. Technical information

A Technical Note document accompanies this publication. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

10. Get in touch

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Department for Education

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