



Department  
for Education

# **Students and qualifications at level 3 and below in England**

**Ad-hoc notice**

**March 2019**

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## Introduction

This ad-hoc statistical release is being published to support the first stage consultation of the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England. It pulls together multiple data sources, to provide a range of analysis of the trends in enrolments in qualifications at level 3 and below<sup>1</sup>, to help understand the need for, and potential impact of, reforms to qualifications.

It presents a general overview of all 16 to 18 year old students<sup>1</sup>, and the mix of qualifications they study. It also presents a more detailed look at 16 to 19 year old students<sup>2</sup> at level 3 and below, including their background characteristics, prior attainment, churn or repeat learning and outcomes at age 19<sup>3</sup>. This is supplemented with data on the highest qualifications studied by adults at level 3 and below. Finally, it considers the qualifications market at level 3 and below, including the enrolments through different funded programme groups, qualifications with no and 'low' enrolments, and pre-existing Applied General Qualifications and Tech Levels.

A glossary is included towards the end of the document, to define some of the technical terminology used throughout this document.

The methodology behind each of the sections of analysis and the tables, is outlined at the end of the document.

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<sup>1</sup> An explanation of the different qualification levels can be found here; [What different qualification levels mean](#).

<sup>2</sup> Note, this refers to students at academic age 16, 17 and 18. This is sometimes referred to as 16 to 18, for example in the Level 3 and below overview, as well as 16 to 19, as is the general approach in this document. However both refer to the 3 years of KS5 education. The difference in approach relates to the different data sources used throughout.

<sup>3</sup> Note, when referred to as 'aged 19' and not as '16 to 19 year olds', this refers to students at academic age 19. This does not overlap with students aged '16 to 19'.

## Main Findings

### Level 3 and below overview

- Nearly half (47%) of 16 to 18 year olds were studying A Level qualifications, with 22% studying qualifications below level 3.

### Student analysis

- Of all 16 to 19 year old students at level 3 and below:
  - A Level students have the highest proportion (98%) holding at least 5 A\*-C GCSEs, compared to 58% of learners studying other level 3 qualifications.
  - The majority studying at level 3 are women (52%), while the majority studying below level 3 are men (60%).
  - Students who received some special educational needs (SEN) support, and those who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) at academic age 15, were more likely to be studying qualifications below level 3, and particularly below level 2.
  - Compared to the average, those from white backgrounds are strongly represented on apprenticeships, and non-GCSE level 2 qualifications. Students from Asian backgrounds are particularly strongly represented in higher education and on A Level qualifications, while students from black backgrounds are most strongly represented on Applied General Qualifications (AGQ)<sup>4</sup>.
  - 22% of students showed patterns of churn or learning at the same level, while studying classroom based qualifications at level 3 and below.
  - 66% of 16 year olds who studied AS and A Level<sup>5</sup> qualifications were in higher education aged 19, compared to just 27% of those who studied just AGQs, 22% studying other level 3 qualifications, and 12% of those who were studying GCSEs.

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<sup>4</sup> Black students were more strongly represented on Advanced Apprenticeships alongside AGQs, however this isn't referenced due to low counts.

<sup>5</sup> Please note that when used in this document, the A/AS Level category does include some other academic level 3 qualifications, for example Pre-U qualifications.

## Qualification analysis

- 62% of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 or below had no enrolments funded through study programmes in 2016 to 2017, while 42% had no funded enrolments at all in both 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017.
- 20% of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 or below had 'low' enrolments<sup>6</sup> across study programmes, Adult Education Budget (AEB) (excluding traineeships), advanced learner loans and European Social Fund (ESF) in 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017.
- In 2016 to 2017, just 4% of enrolments across all funded programme groups were on 'redeveloped' AGQs and Tech Levels, compared to 17% of enrolments on 'pre-existing' AGQs and Tech Levels.
- Enrolments across all funded programmes in 2016 to 2017 on 'pre-existing' AGQs and Tech Levels were most likely to be at general FE colleges. Those at schools, sixth form colleges and other public funded providers were most likely to be on AGQs, and those at private sector public funded and special colleges were most likely to be on Tech Levels.
- Compared to enrolments through all funded programmes in 2016 to 2017 on 'redeveloped' AGQs and Tech Levels, or AS and A Levels, enrolments on 'pre-existing' AGQs and Tech Levels are more likely to be from students who are older, have declared SEN or declared learning or a disability, are white and male.
- On qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below, the majority of enrolments through traineeships, community learning provision and the remainder of the AEB are on qualifications below level 2, while the overwhelming majority (72%) of enrolments through study programmes are on level 3 qualifications.

## Level 3 and below overview

When considering the highest qualifications studied by 16 to 18 year olds, excluding higher education and other aims above level 3, the majority are studying at level 3, and within this most are studying AS and A Levels (see [Table 1](#)). It is also relatively common for students to study different types of qualifications alongside each other, with 20% of students studying multiple qualifications across the 5 mixed qualification categories considered.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Low' enrolments are defined as a qualification having either of the following, across the funded programme groups being considered:

- one or more enrolment but less than 100 enrolments, in both 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017
- one or more enrolment but less than 100 enrolments in 2015 to 2016, and no enrolments in 2016 to 2017

# Student analysis

## Background characteristics

Learners studying in higher education (94%) and AS and A Level qualifications (98%) in 2016 to 2017 were most likely to already hold 5 or more A\* to C GCSE's (see [Table 2](#)). Below level 2 qualifications have students with the lowest proportion of level 2 English and maths prior attainment (10%).

The gender split across students studying at level 3 and below is varied (see [Table 3](#)), with women being strongly represented in higher education (57% of those in higher education are women) and on A Levels (56%), while men are more strongly represented on below level 2 (66%), other level 2 (59%), and Technical Certificates (59%) qualifications and apprenticeships (59%).

Figure 1 below shows SEN status at academic age 15, by their highest study aim. Below level 2 qualifications had the largest proportion of students (64%) with *some* recorded SEN aged 15 (see [Table 4](#)). Below level 2 qualifications were also the only qualifications to have a greater proportion of students with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or Statement, than received SEN support. In contrast, AS and A Levels have the lowest proportion of students with *some* registered SEN, at just 5%.

**Figure 1: Distribution of 16 to 19 year olds across qualification type, by SEN status at academic age 15**

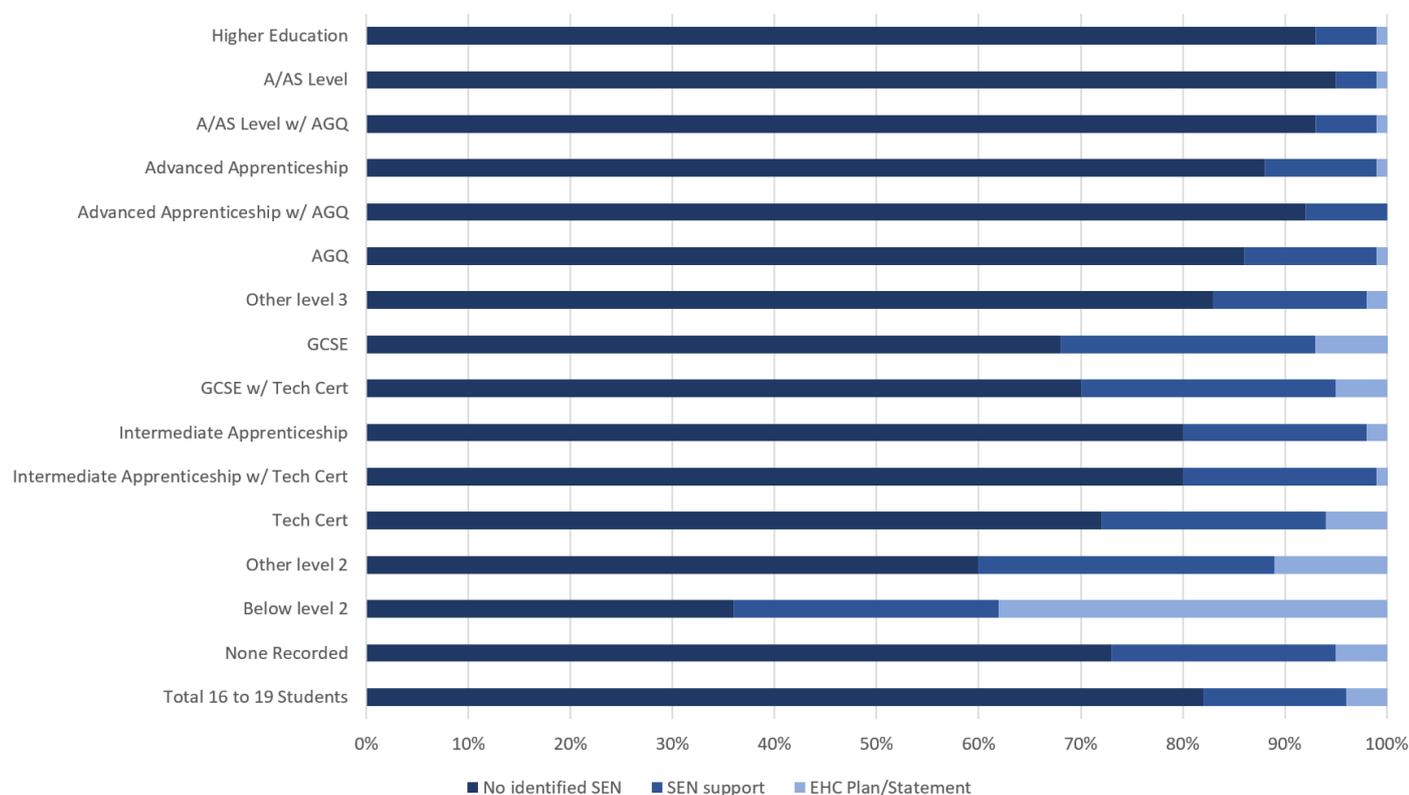
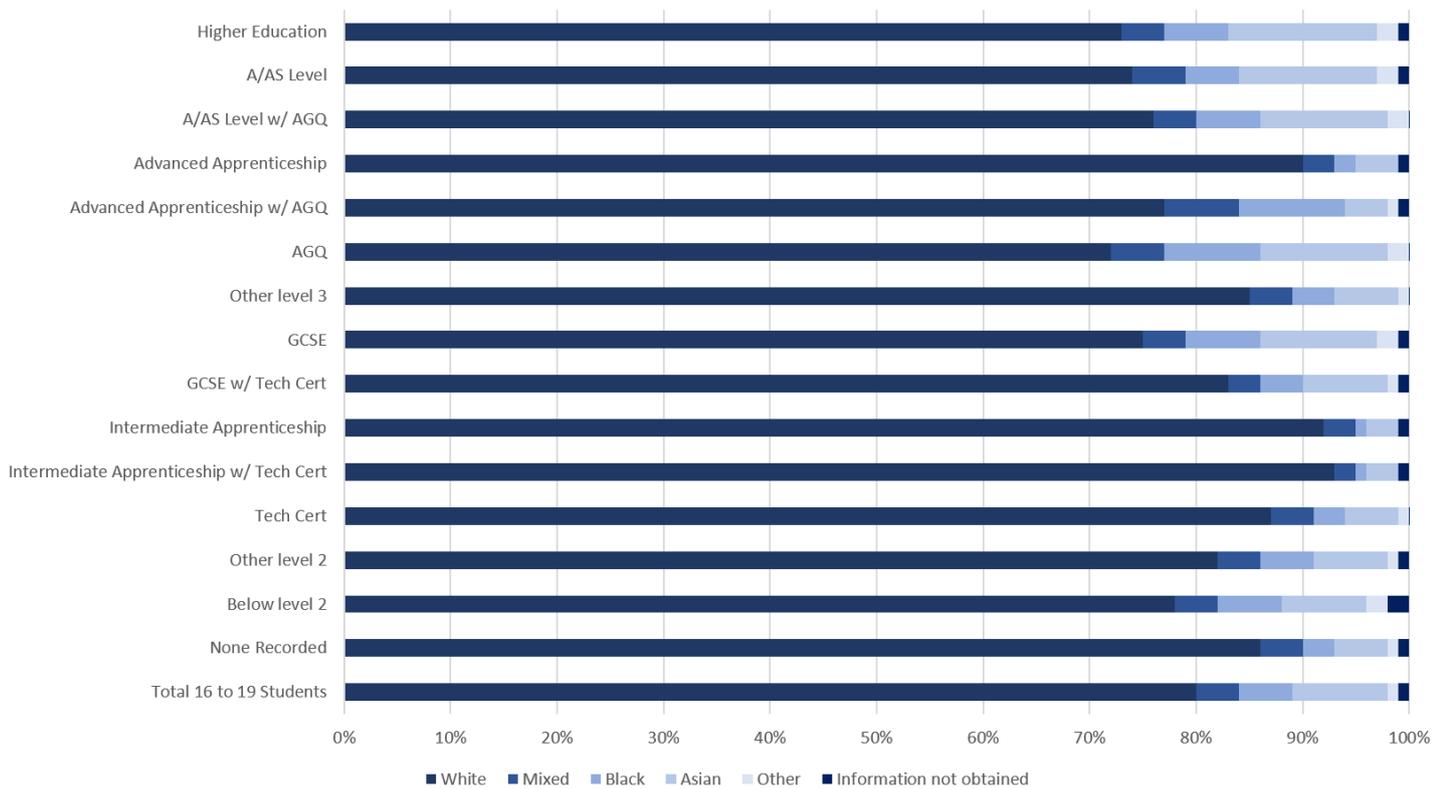


Figure 2 shows ethnic background by highest study aim (see also [Table 5](#)). Students from white backgrounds are strongly represented on apprenticeships, other level 3 (85% of those studying other level 3 qualifications are white) and Technical Certificate qualifications (87%). Students from black backgrounds are particularly strongly represented on AGQs (9%) alongside those from Asian backgrounds (13%), who are also strongly represented on AS and A Levels and higher education courses.

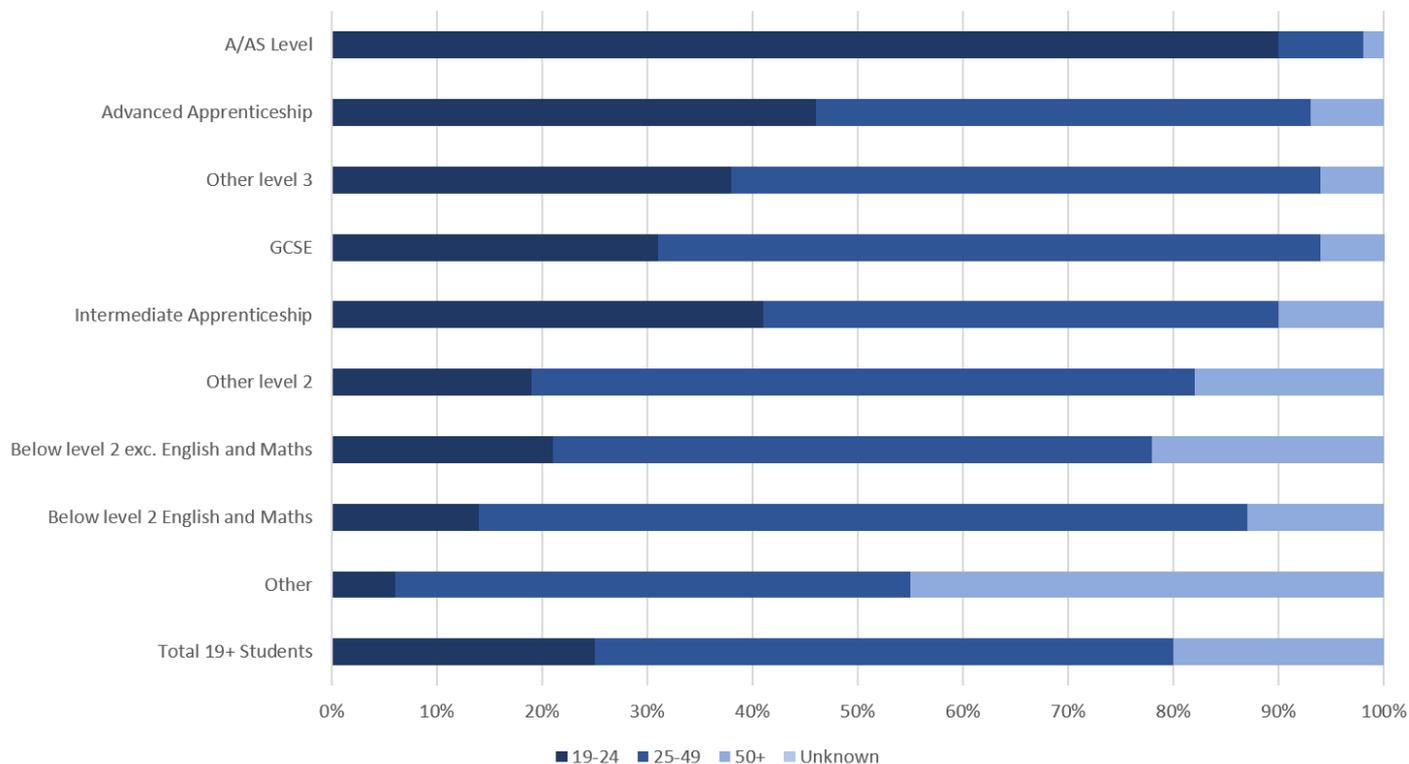
**Figure 2: Distribution of 16 to 19 year olds across qualification type, by ethnicity**



Students who were eligible for free schools meals (FSM) at age 15, were most strongly represented on qualifications below level 2 (33%), and under-represented in higher education and on AS and A Levels (8% and 7%) (see [Table 6](#)). This is reflective of a general trend for higher FSM representation on lower levels of qualifications.

Figure 3 shows the the distribution of adult (19+) students across broad qualification types. Young adults (19-24 year olds) are most strongly represented on AS and A Levels (90%), other level 3 qualifications (38%) and apprenticeships (see also [Table 9](#)). Adults aged 50 and over, are particularly well represented on non-English and maths qualifications below level 2, and ‘other’ qualifications – made up of mostly non-regulated provision delivered as part of community learning.

**Figure 3: Distribution of 19+ students across qualification type, by age band**



## Progression

[Table 8](#) shows the recorded education or employment of individuals at age 19, based on what they were studying at age 16. Those who were studying AS and A Levels, and those studying AS and A Levels alongside AGQs, at age 16, are particularly well represented in higher education at age 19 (66% and 43% progressed to higher education respectively).

Individuals who studied below level 2 qualifications at age 16 were the most likely to be in sustained employment at age 19 (13%)<sup>7</sup>, while students who studied other level 2 qualifications were the most likely to have no recorded activity (51%). No recorded activity means the individual was not in recorded funded education, or sustained employment.

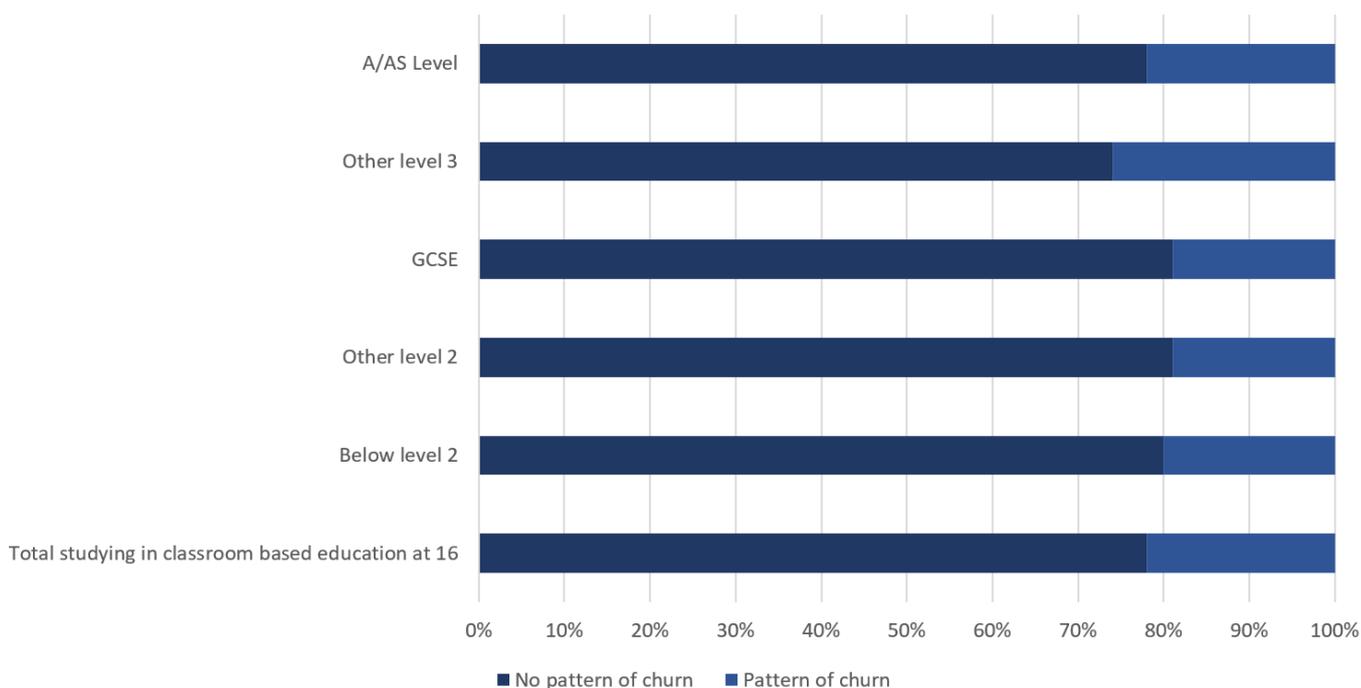
Figure 4 below shows the proportion of students who show some sign of churn or repeat learning between the age of 16 and 18. For AS and A Levels, this is defined as completing 1 or 2 years of the course then switching to a vocational qualification or

<sup>7</sup> Note, those studying advanced apprenticeships alongside AGQ were the most likely to be in sustained employment (14%), however they also represent the lowest number of students (1,600), versus a total cohort of 584,200.

intermediate apprenticeship. For other level 3 qualifications this is defined as studying the same qualification type for three years, switching to study AS and A Levels or a lower level qualification at age 17 or 18, or switching to study an apprenticeship at age 17. For qualifications at level 2 and below, this is defined as studying the same qualification type for three years<sup>8</sup>, switching to a higher level qualification and subsequently dropping back down, switching to a lower level qualification, or switching to an apprenticeship aged 17.

Churn or repeat learning is present across all qualification types considered (see [Table 7](#)). Other level 3 qualifications were the most likely (26%) to have students aged 16, who display some pattern of churn or repeat learning by the age 18, while GCSEs and other level 2 qualifications were the least likely (19%).

**Figure 4: Proportion of students exhibiting patterns of churn or repeat learning, by qualification type**



## Qualification analysis

### Funded qualification numbers

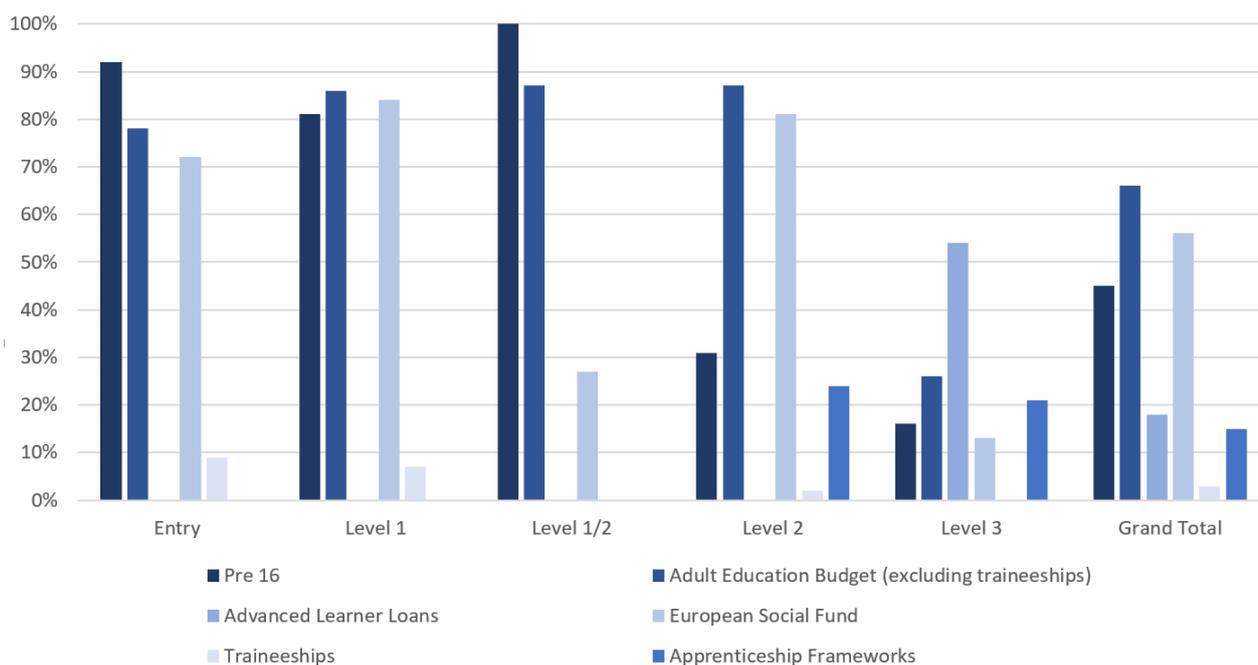
Figure 5 below shows the proportion of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below, that are also approved for other funded offers, predominantly adults aged 19 plus. A large proportion of these qualifications are approved for funding for adult

<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, GCSEs are treated as other level 2 qualifications. This is because the majority of people studying GCSEs at post-16 are doing so alongside other level 2 qualifications.

students (19 plus) through the AEB (excluding traineeships), ranging from 78% at entry level to 87% at level 2 (see [Table 10](#)).

Only 3% of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below are also available through traineeships, although this reflects the fact there are very few qualifications (400) available through traineeships. Aside from qualifications approved for funding through the European Social Fund (89%), at least 95% of all qualifications approved for funding are also approved for 16 to 19 (see [Table 11](#)).

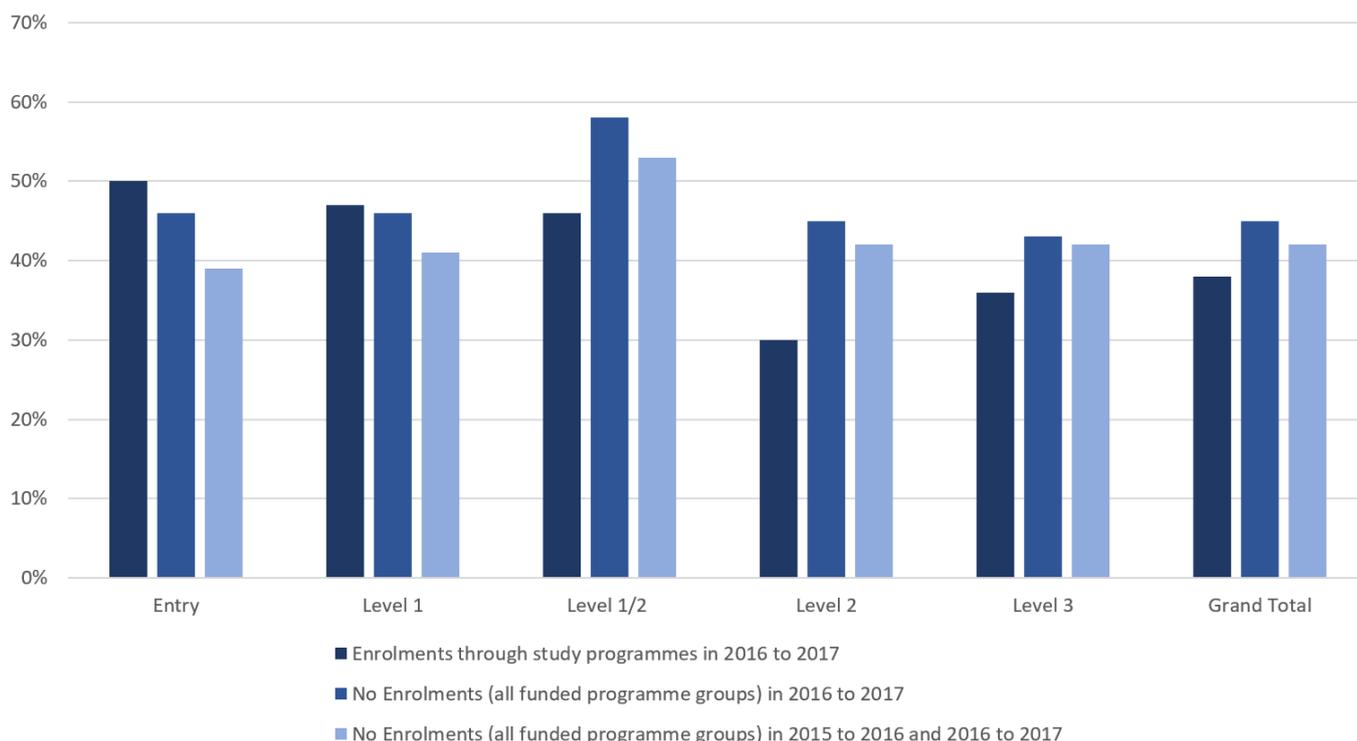
**Figure 5: Proportion of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 year olds and other qualification offers at July 2018, by qualification level**



## Enrolments

The majority of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below (62%), offered through study programmes, had no enrolments in 2016 to 2017, as detailed in figure 6 below. In 2016 to 2017, 45% of these qualifications had no enrolments across all funded programme groups, and 42% had no enrolments across all funded programme groups in both 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017 (see [Table 12](#)).

**Figure 6: Proportion of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below at July 2018 with enrolments and no enrolments, by qualification level**



In addition 22% of qualifications approved for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below and offered through study programmes had ‘low enrolments’(see Table 13). ‘Low’ enrolments are defined as a qualification having either of the following, across the funded programme groups being considered:

- one or more enrolment but fewer than 100 enrolments, in both 2015 to 2016 **and** 2016 to 2017
- one or more enrolment but fewer than 100 enrolments in 2015 to 2016, **and** no enrolments in 2016 to 2017

Another approach to measuring participation is using the ‘core aim’ methodology. Each student is assigned to the qualification that is their primary purpose of study, as recorded by their provider. 72% of level 3 qualifications available for pre-19 funding with at least one 16 to 19 year old ‘core aim’ were on the 2016-2018 16 to 18 performance tables, compared to just 13% at level 2 (see [Table 14](#)).

41% of entries by students at the end of 16 to 18 study<sup>9</sup> in 2017 to 2018 were in qualifications not in scope for reporting in the 2018 16 to 18 performance tables. This figure has been derived by looking at all exam entries from students flagged as at the end of 16 to 18 study where the allocated provider<sup>10</sup> in each academic year was in scope for inclusion in 16 to 18 performance tables at a national level.

Figure 7 below shows the distribution of enrolments on qualifications approved for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below, by level and funded programme groups in 2016 to 2017. There is significant variation in distribution across funded programme groups. For example, enrolments through community learning are broadly split across entry level (39%), level 1 (36%) and level 2 (23%) qualifications (see [Table 19](#)). Enrolments through loans are for level 3 qualifications only. Advanced learner loans are available for adults 19 plus for qualifications from level 3 to 6.

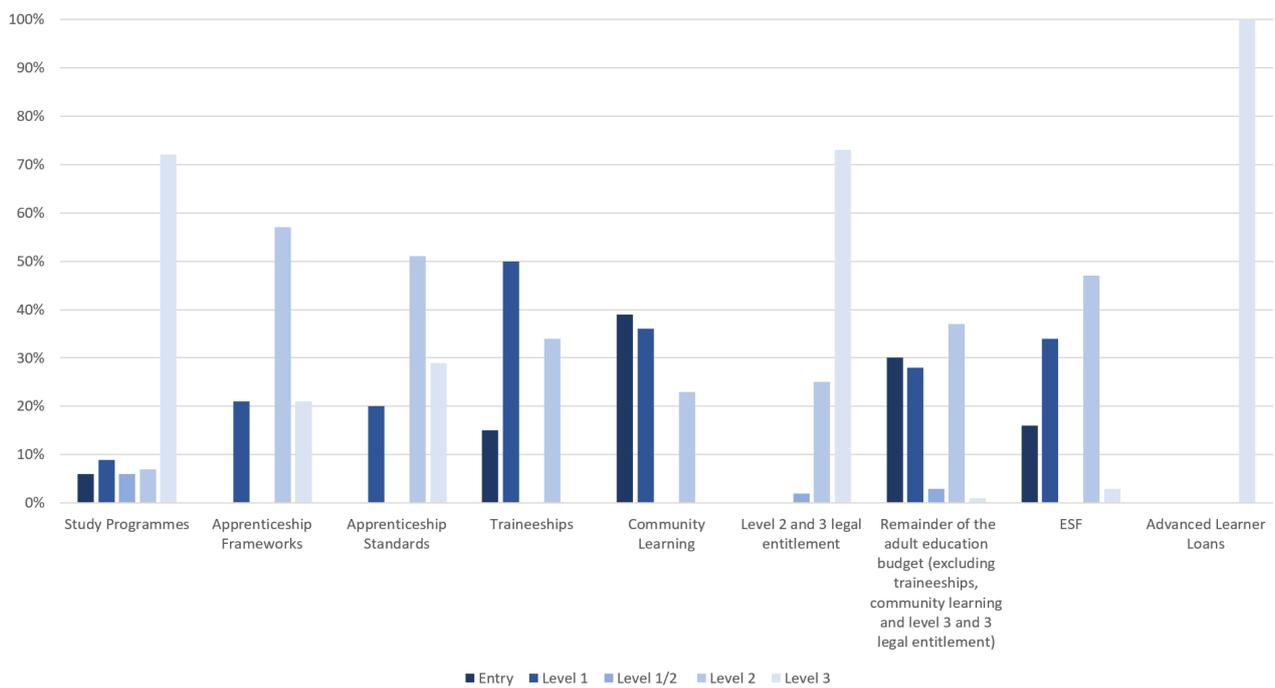
In terms of absolute enrolment numbers (see [Table 19](#)), there are nearly 2.9 million through study programmes, and similarly nearly 2.9 million through apprenticeship standards and apprenticeship frameworks combined. However other offers, such as traineeships (29,300), community learning provision (4,400) and qualifications which are available for learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking their first Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications as part of the level 2 and 3 legal entitlement (16,100) have relatively low numbers of enrolments.

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<sup>9</sup> Students are flagged at the end of 16 to 18 study if they have entered qualifications(s) equal to the size of at least 2 A levels, are allocated to the same school or college for the last two academic years, or are academic age 18 at the start of 2017 to 2018 and have not been reported previously. This means that some entries from students that have already left the provider but were not previously reported, will be included in the 2017 to 2018 cohort.

<sup>10</sup> Results are allocated on an annual basis to the school or college where the student has enrolled to take their main programme of study. All results taken in that academic year will be allocated to the main provider, irrespective of where they were taken, such that on completion of 16 to 18 study outcomes are reported against one, two or three schools or colleges.

**Figure 7: Distribution of enrolments across funded programme groups, by qualification level**



### ‘Pre-existing’ qualifications

Figure 8 below shows the proportion of enrolments across level 3 by the qualification type, across all funded programme groups in 2016 to 2017. It shows that, while AS and A Levels represent most enrolments at level 3 (55%), there are over four times as many enrolments on ‘pre-existing’ AGQs and Tech Levels (17%) as there are on the redeveloped AGQs and Tech Levels (4%) (see [Table 15](#)).

**Figure 8: Distribution of enrolments at level 3 across all funded programme groups in 2016 to 2017, by qualification type**

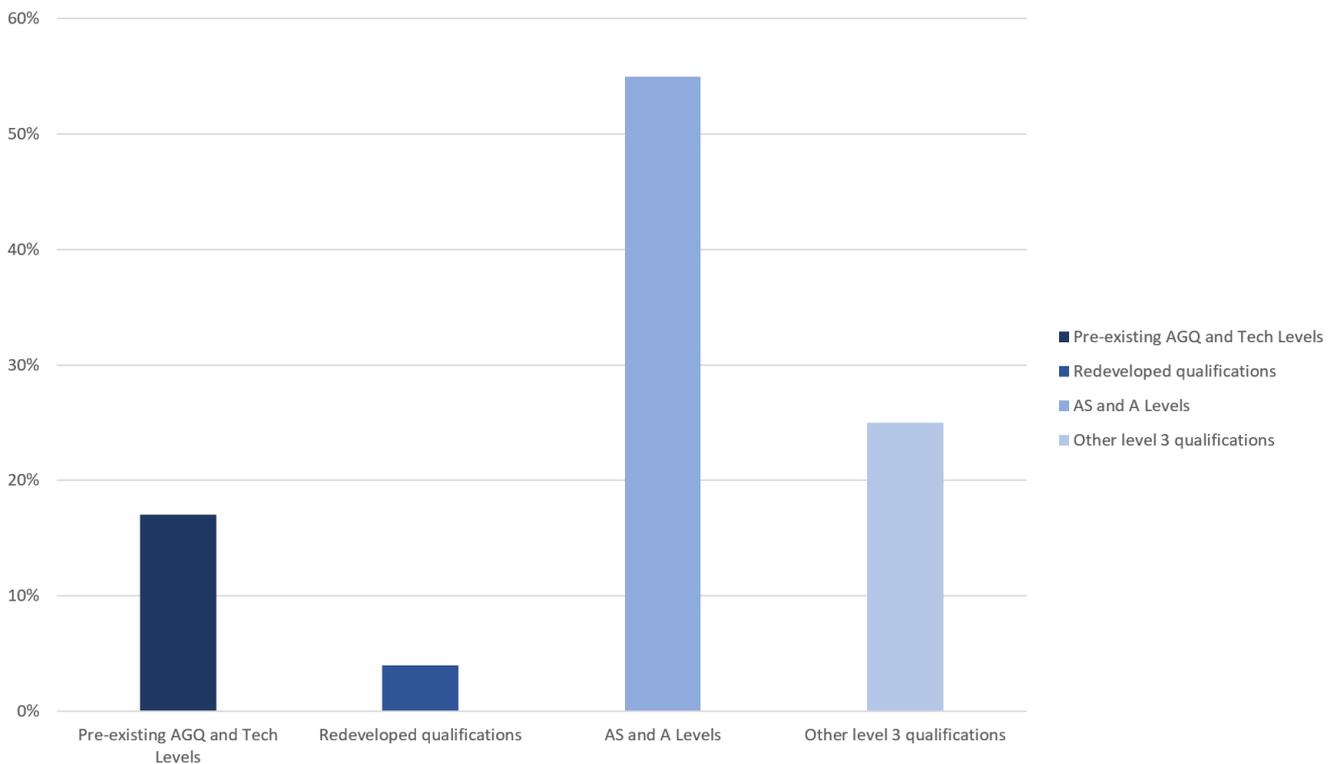
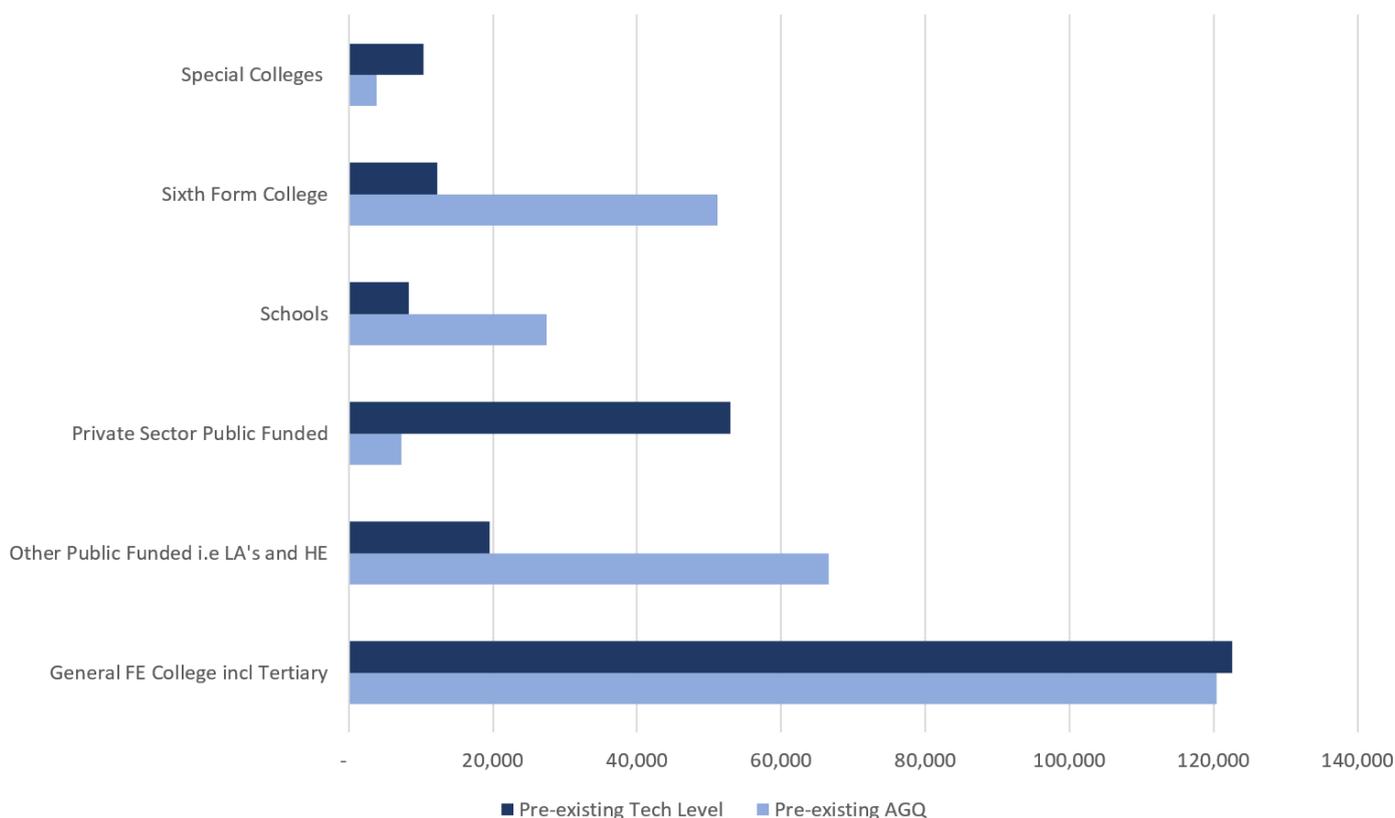


Figure 9 below shows that the most common provider type for enrolments on pre-existing AGQs (43%) and Tech Levels (54%) in 2016 to 2017 are General FE Colleges (see [Table 16](#)). Sixth form colleges, schools and other public funded providers have more enrolments on pre-existing AGQs compared to Tech Levels. Special colleges and private sector public funded providers have more enrolments on pre-existing Tech Levels compared to AGQs.

**Figure 9: Distribution of enrolments across all funded programme groups on pre-existing Tech Level and AGQs in 2016 to 2017, by provider type**



For the majority (69%) of providers, enrolments across all funded programme groups on pre-existing AGQs and Tech Levels make up less than 25% of their total enrolments at level 3 (see [Table 17](#)). However, for a small minority (3%), these qualifications make up over 75% of their enrolments at level 3. This could be due to a range of reasons, including that the providers offer a very limited amount of provision at level 3 (for example, schools without sixth forms), or are largely focused on enrolments not covered by our funded programme groups, and thus these enrolments may not make up a significant proportion of their *total* enrolments.

Compared to enrolments on redeveloped qualifications, enrolments across all funded programme groups on pre-existing AGQ and Tech Levels are more likely to be over age 19 (22%), have some recorded SEN or declared learning difficulty or disability (14%), be from a white background (76%) and be male (54%) (see [Table 18](#)). Enrolments on other level 3 qualifications were the most likely to be over age 19 (71%) and from a white background (85%), while enrolments on AS and A Levels were the most likely to be aged 16-19 (100%) and female (57%).

## Tables

**Table 1: Highest study aim of students aged 16 to 18 in full time education at level 3 and below and apprenticeships, at the end of 2017**

Highest study aim	16 to 18 year olds in full-time education
A/AS Level	34%
Overlap with A/AS Level and Applied General	5%
Overlap with A/AS Level and Tech Level	0%
Overlap with A/AS Level and other level 3	8%
Applied General	4%
Tech Level	2%
Other level 3 quals	17%
Advanced Apprenticeships	4%
GCSE	4%
Overlap with GCSE and Tech Cert	2%
Overlap with GCSE and other level 2	5%
Tech Cert	1%
Other level 2 quals	3%
Apprenticeships	6%
Level 1	3%
Other quals	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,240,300</b>

**Table 2: Number of 16 to 19 students in 2016 to 2017 by highest study aim, and prior attainment**

Highest Study Aim	Overall Prior Attainment	5+ A*-C GCSE		Other level 2		Below level 2		Total <sup>11</sup>
	Level 2 English and Math	Academic or functional	None	Academic or functional	None	Academic or functional	None	
Higher Education		93%	1%	3%	2%	0%	0%	<b>157,200</b>
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>		95%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	<b>423,100</b>
A/AS Level w/ AGQ		81%	8%	2%	1%	3%	5%	<b>100,700</b>
Advanced Apprenticeship		61%	4%	8%	9%	7%	12%	<b>58,100</b>

<sup>11</sup> The total number of students is different to Table 1, due to a difference in methodology. Table 1 is based on a snapshot of student numbers at the end of 2017, while Table 2 is based on the YPMAD for the 2016 to 2017 academic year. In addition, Table 2 also includes 16 to 19 year olds studying higher education, and those whom we have characteristics data for at age 15, but not subsequently.

<sup>12</sup> Note, AS and A Levels categories also include other level 3 academic qualifications on the 16 to 18 performance table lists, including pre-u qualifications.

Highest Study Aim	Overall Prior Attainment	5+ A*-C GCSE		Other level 2		Below level 2		Total <sup>11</sup>
	Level 2 English and Math	Academic or functional	None	Academic or functional	None	Academic or functional	None	
Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ		67%	5%	3%	3%	10%	12%	4,100
AGQ		52%	9%	3%	10%	8%	18%	167,200
Other level 3		51%	7%	6%	16%	7%	13%	138,000
GCSE		1%	4%	0%	7%	2%	87%	102,400
GCSE w/ Tech Cert		0%	6%	1%	10%	2%	81%	33,100
Intermediate Apprenticeship		33%	4%	5%	11%	8%	39%	58,000
Intermediate Apprenticeship w/ Tech Cert		31%	4%	3%	8%	9%	45%	36,700
Tech Cert		34%	2%	3%	5%	15%	40%	24,300
Other level 2		15%	2%	2%	8%	8%	65%	44,800
Below level 2		6%	1%	1%	3%	3%	86%	79,100
None Recorded		37%	2%	5%	12%	5%	40%	261,100
<b>Total</b>		<b>58%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>1,687,900</b>

**Table 3: Number of 16 to 19 students in 2016 to 2017 by highest study aim, and gender recorded at academic age 15**

Highest Study Aim	Male	Female	Total
Higher Education	43%	57%	157,200
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	44%	56%	423,100
A/AS Level w/ AGQ	48%	52%	100,700
Advanced Apprenticeship	61%	39%	58,100
Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ	72%	28%	4,100
AGQ	51%	49%	167,200
Other level 3	51%	49%	138,000
GCSE	58%	42%	102,400
GCSE w/ Tech Cert	62%	38%	33,100
Intermediate Apprenticeship	56%	44%	58,000
Intermediate Apprenticeship w/ Tech Cert	60%	40%	36,700
Tech Cert	59%	41%	24,300
Other level 2	59%	41%	44,800
Below level 2	66%	34%	79,100
None Recorded	55%	45%	261,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>1,687,900</b>

**Table 4: Number of 16 to 19 students in 2016 to 2017 by highest study aim, and SEN status recorded at academic age 15**

Highest Study Aim	No identified SEN	SEN support	EHC Plan/Statement	Total
Higher Education	93%	6%	1%	157,200
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	95%	4%	1%	423,100
A/AS Level w/ AGQ	93%	6%	1%	100,700
Advanced Apprenticeship	88%	11%	1%	58,100
Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ	92%	8%	1%	4,100
AGQ	86%	13%	2%	167,200
Other level 3	83%	15%	2%	138,000
GCSE	68%	25%	8%	102,400
GCSE w/ Tech Cert	70%	25%	5%	33,100
Intermediate Apprenticeship	80%	18%	2%	58,000
Intermediate Apprenticeship w/ Tech Cert	80%	19%	2%	36,700
Tech Cert	72%	22%	6%	24,300
Other level 2	60%	29%	11%	44,800
Below level 2	36%	26%	38%	79,100
None Recorded	73%	22%	5%	261,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1,687,900</b>

**Table 5: Number of 16 to 19 students in 2016 to 2017 by highest study aim, and ethnicity recorded at academic age 15**

Highest Study Aim	White	Mixed	Black	Asian	Other	Information not obtained	Total
Higher Education	73%	4%	6%	14%	2%	1%	157,200
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	74%	5%	5%	13%	2%	1%	423,100
A/AS Level w/ AGQ	76%	4%	6%	12%	2%	1%	100,700
Advanced Apprenticeship	90%	3%	2%	4%	0%	1%	58,100
Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ	77%	7%	10%	4%	1%	1%	4,100
AGQ	72%	5%	9%	12%	2%	1%	167,200
Other level 3	85%	4%	4%	6%	1%	1%	138,000
GCSE	75%	4%	7%	10%	2%	1%	102,400
GCSE w/ Tech Cert	83%	3%	4%	7%	1%	1%	33,100
Intermediate Apprenticeship	92%	3%	1%	3%	0%	1%	58,000
Intermediate Apprenticeship w/ Tech Cert	92%	2%	1%	3%	0%	1%	36,700
Tech Cert	87%	4%	3%	5%	1%	1%	24,300
Other level 2	80%	4%	5%	7%	1%	1%	44,800
Below level 2	78%	4%	6%	8%	2%	2%	79,100

Highest Study Aim	White	Mixed	Black	Asian	Other	Information not obtained	Total
None Recorded	86%	4%	3%	5%	1%	1%	261,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1,687,900</b>

**Table 6: Number of 16 to 19 students in 2016 to 2017 by highest study aim, and FSM status recorded at academic age 15**

Highest Study Aim	Not eligible for FSM	Eligible for FSM	Total
Higher Education	92%	8%	157,200
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	93%	7%	423,100
A/AS Level w/ AGQ	90%	10%	100,700
Advanced Apprenticeship	91%	9%	58,100
Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ	91%	9%	4,100
AGQ	85%	15%	167,200
Other level 3	86%	14%	138,000
GCSE	76%	24%	102,400
GCSE w/ Tech Cert	79%	21%	33,100
Intermediate Apprenticeship	87%	13%	58,000
Intermediate Apprenticeship w/ Tech Cert	87%	13%	36,700
Tech Cert	80%	20%	24,300
Other level 2	73%	27%	44,800
Below level 2	67%	33%	79,100
None Recorded	80%	20%	261,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>1,687,900</b>

**Table 7: Number of students showing patterns of churn<sup>13</sup> between age 16 and 18, by highest study aim at 16: cohort academic age 16 in 2014 to 2015**

Highest Study Aim	No pattern of churn	Pattern of churn	Total
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	78%	22%	276,300
Other level 3	74%	26%	94,200
GCSE	81%	19%	47,800
Other level 2	81%	19%	54,000
Below level 2	80%	20%	49,200

<sup>13</sup> For AS and A Levels, this is defined as completing 1 or 2 years of the course then switching to a vocational qualification or intermediate apprenticeship. For other level 3 qualifications this is defined as studying the same qualification type for three years, switching to study AS and A Levels or a lower level qualification at age 17 or 18, or switching to study an apprenticeship at age 17. For qualifications at level 2 and below, this is defined as studying the same qualification type for three years, switching to a higher level qualification and subsequently dropping back down, switching to a lower level qualification, or switching to an apprenticeship aged 17.

Highest Study Aim	No pattern of churn	Pattern of churn	Total
Total studying in classroom based education at 16	78%	22%	521,400

**Table 8: Number of students aged 16 in 2013 to 2014 by highest study aim, by highest study aim aged 19 in 2016 to 2017**

Highest Study Aim aged 16	Higher Education	A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	A/AS Level w/ AGQ	Advanced Apprenticeship	Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ	AGQ	Other level 3	GCSE	Intermediate Apprenticeship	Other level 2	Below level 2	Sustained Employment	None Recorded	Total
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	66%	0%	0%	5%	0%	1%	3%	0%	3%	1%	0%	4%	16%	231,200
A/AS Level w/ AGQ	43%	0%	0%	8%	0%	1%	5%	0%	6%	1%	1%	7%	27%	49,400
Advanced Apprenticeship	10%	0%	0%	38%	0%	0%	5%	0%	4%	1%	1%	10%	30%	5,600
Advanced Apprenticeship w/ AGQ	12%	0%	0%	11%	0%	1%	5%	0%	4%	2%	0%	14%	50%	1,600
AGQ	27%	0%	0%	7%	0%	1%	7%	0%	7%	2%	1%	10%	37%	53,800
Other level 3	22%	0%	0%	8%	0%	1%	8%	0%	7%	2%	1%	11%	39%	44,500
GCSE	12%	1%	0%	5%	0%	4%	8%	2%	7%	4%	3%	10%	42%	33,700
Intermediate Apprenticeship	1%	0%	0%	24%	0%	0%	3%	0%	8%	3%	1%	12%	47%	22,200
Other level 2	5%	0%	0%	6%	0%	2%	7%	1%	8%	4%	4%	12%	51%	63,700
Below level 2	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	2%	4%	2%	7%	7%	14%	13%	48%	57,300
None recorded	6%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%	4%	3%	4%	12%	65%	212,00
<b>Total</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>584,200</b>

**Table 9: Number of adult students in 2016 to 2017 by highest study aim, by age group**

Highest Study Aim	19-24	25-49	50+	Unknown	Total
A/AS Level <sup>12</sup>	90%	8%	2%	0%	<b>2,300</b>
Advanced Apprenticeship	46%	47%	7%	0%	<b>314,800</b>
Other level 3	38%	56%	6%	0%	<b>152,400</b>
GCSE	31%	63%	7%	0%	<b>40,800</b>
Intermediate Apprenticeship	41%	49%	10%	0%	<b>338,200</b>
Other level 2	19%	63%	18%	0%	<b>384,200</b>
Below level 2 exc. English and Maths	21%	57%	22%	0%	<b>326,100</b>
Below level 2 English and Maths	14%	73%	13%	0%	<b>161,600</b>
Other <sup>14</sup>	6%	48%	45%	0%	<b>442,600</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2,236,800</b>

**Table 10: Number of qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 or below, by other qualification offers at July 2018**

Level	Qualifications approved for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below	Pre 16	Adult Education Budget (excluding traineeships)	Advanced Learner Loans	European Social Fund	Traineeships	Apprenticeship Frameworks
Entry	<b>1,800</b>	92%	78%	0%	72%	9%	0%
Level 1	<b>2,000</b>	81%	86%	0%	84%	7%	0%
Level 1/2	<b>400</b>	100%	87%	0%	27%	0%	0%
Level 2	<b>4,000</b>	31%	87%	0%	81%	2%	24%
Level 3	<b>4,000</b>	16%	26%	54%	13%	0%	21%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12,200</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>15%</b>

**Table 11: Number of qualifications approved for funding at level 3 and below at July 2018, by qualification offers**

Level	Qualifications approved for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below	Pre 16	Adult Education Budget (excluding traineeships)	Advanced Learner Loans	European Social Fund	Traineeships	Apprenticeship Frameworks
Number of qualifications	12,200	5,600	8,400	2,200	7,700	400	1,900
% available to 16 to 19 year olds	100%	99%	95%	96%	89%	99%	97%

**Table 12: Qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below at July 2018, by presence of enrolments**

Level	Enrolments through study programmes in 2016 to 2017	No Enrolments (all funded programme groups) in 2016 to 2017	No Enrolments (all funded programme groups) in 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017	Total
Entry	50%	46%	39%	<b>1,800</b>
Level 1	47%	46%	41%	<b>2,000</b>
Level 1/2	46%	58%	53%	<b>400</b>
Level 2	30%	45%	42%	<b>4,000</b>
Level 3	36%	43%	42%	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>12,200</b>

**Table 13: Qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below at July 2018 with 'low' enrolments, by funded programme groups<sup>15</sup>**

Funded programme groups	% of qualifications with 'low' enrolments
Study programmes	22%
Study programmes, AEB (excluding traineeships) and loans	20%
Study programmes, AEB (excluding traineeships), loans and ESF	20%

**Table 14: Number of qualifications on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19, with 16 to 19 year old 'core aims'<sup>16</sup>**

Level	Qualifications with a 16 to 18 year old 'core aim'	....of which are included in the 2016 to 2018 16 to 18 performance tables
Level 2 and below	2,600	13%
Level 3	1,600	72%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>35%</b>

**Table 15: Enrolments on level 3 qualifications across all funded programme groups in 2016 to 2017**

Enrolments	Pre-existing AGQ and Tech Levels	Redeveloped qualifications	AS and A Levels	Other level 3 qualifications	Total
Enrolments	17%	4%	55%	25%	<b>3,042,300</b>

<sup>15</sup> 'Low' enrolments is defined as a qualification having either of the following, across the funded programme groups being considered:

- one or more enrolment but less than 100 enrolments, in both 2015 to 2016 **and** 2016 to 2017
- one ore more enrolment but less than 100 enrolments in 2015 to 2016, **and** no enrolments in 2016 to 2017

The funded programme groups being considered are:

- Study programmes
- Study programmes, loans and AEB (excluding traineeships)
- Study programmes, loans, AEB (excluding traineeships) and ESF

For this table, AEB (excluding traineeships) includes the following funded programme groups:

- Level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement
- Remainder of the AEB (encompassing entry, level 1 and level 2 qualifications)
- Community learning

<sup>16</sup> This methodology assigns each student to their 'core aim', the qualification they are doing which is believed to be their primary purpose of study, and is recorded as such by their provider.

**Table 16: Enrolments in 2016 to 2017 on pre-existing AGQs and Tech Levels across all funded programme groups, by provider type**

Provider type	Pre-existing AGQs	Pre-existing Tech Levels
General FE College incl Tertiary	43%	54%
Other Public Funded i.e. LA's and HE	24%	9%
Private Sector Public Funded	3%	23%
Schools	10%	4%
Sixth Form College	18%	5%
Special Colleges - (Agriculture and Horticulture & Art Design and Performing Arts), Specialist Designated College	1%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>277,700</b>	<b>226,500</b>

**Table 17: Pre-existing AGQs and Tech Levels as a proportion of providers total level 3 enrolments on qualifications across all funded programme groups in 2016 to 2017**

% of total level 3 enrolments that are pre-existing AGQs and Tech Levels	Proportion of providers
Less than 25%	69%
25% or more, but less than 75%	28%
75% or more	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,300</b>

**Table 18: Background characteristics of enrolments on level 3 qualifications across all funded programme groups in 2016 to 2017, by qualification type**

Background Characteristics	Pre-existing AGQ and Tech Levels	Redeveloped qualifications	AS and A Levels	Other level 3 qualifications
Age				
<i>Pre 16</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>16-19</i>	78%	90%	100%	29%
<i>19-23</i>	12%	6%	0%	25%
<i>24-53</i>	10%	4%	0%	43%
<i>54+</i>	0%	0%	0%	3%
SEND				
<i>SEN or declared learning difficulty or disability</i>	14%	7%	5%	8%
<i>No known</i>	86%	93%	95%	92%
Ethnicity				
<i>White</i>	76%	74%	74%	85%
<i>Non-white</i>	24%	26%	26%	15%
Gender				
<i>Female</i>	46%	50%	57%	56%
<i>Male</i>	54%	50%	43%	44%

**Table 19: Number of enrolments on qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 and below at July 2018 by funded programme group and qualification level in 2016 to 2017**

Level	Study Programmes	Apprenticeship Frameworks	Apprenticeship Standards	Traineeships	Community Learning	Level 2 and 3 legal entitlement	Remainder of the adult education budget (excluding traineeships, community learning and level 3 and 3 legal entitlement)	ESF	Advanced Learner Loans
Entry	6%	0%	0%	15%	39%	0%	30%	16%	0%
Level 1	9%	21%	20%	50%	36%	0%	28%	34%	0%
Level 1/2	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%
Level 2	7%	57%	51%	34%	23%	25%	37%	47%	0%
Level 3	72%	21%	29%	0%	0%	73%	1%	3%	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,859,500</b>	<b>2,580,100</b>	<b>29,200</b>	<b>29,300</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>16,100</b>	<b>932,100</b>	<b>43,400</b>	<b>78,700</b>

## Glossary

Term	Definition
<p>Adult Education Budget (AEB)</p>	<p>The AEB aims to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or other learning.</p> <p>The national AEB supports three statutory entitlements to full funding for eligible adults (aged 19 and above). These are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children’s Learning Act 2009, and enable eligible adults to be fully funded for the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English and mathematics, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A* to C or grade 9 to 4, and/or</li> <li>• first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or</li> <li>• first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23.</li> </ul> <p>Further information on AEB funding and performance can be found here: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-funding-rules-2018-to-2019">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-funding-rules-2018-to-2019</a>.</p> <p>From August 2019, AEB is devolved. Further information can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-devolution">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adult-education-budget-aeb-devolution</a>.</p>
<p>Advanced learner loan</p>	<p>An advanced learner loan helps eligible adults (aged 19 and above) with the costs of a course at a college or training provider in England.</p> <p>Details can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan">https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan</a>.</p> <p>Qualifications for which a individual can take a loan out for a known as qualifications that are designated for loans. These can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-qualifications-catalogue">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-qualifications-catalogue</a></p>
<p>Applied General qualifications (AGQs)</p>	<p>These are level 3 qualifications for post-16 students. Applied General qualifications allow entry to a range of higher education courses, either by meeting the entry requirements in their own right or being accepted alongside and adding value to other level 3 qualifications such as A Levels. Applied General qualifications are included in DfE’s 16 to 18 school and college performance tables.</p>

Term	Definition
Apprenticeship	<p>An apprenticeship is a job that combines practical training with study.</p> <p>See “A guide to apprenticeships” at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-apprenticeships">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-apprenticeships</a> for further information.</p>
Apprenticeship frameworks	<p>Apprenticeship frameworks are developed by sector bodies and primarily qualification focussed, containing a combination of competency based qualifications and broader technical and vocational qualifications. Apprenticeship frameworks must follow the minimum requirements set out in the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE). These are being superseded by apprenticeship standards.</p>
Apprenticeship standards	<p>Apprenticeship standards are more occupationally focussed and are not qualification led (although they may contain mandatory on-programme qualifications). The apprenticeship standard is developed by an employer (trailblazer) group and will set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required in that occupation. There will also be an independent end-point assessment of the standard. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is responsible for approving apprenticeship standards.</p>
Classroom-based provision	<p>Provision delivered in a school, college or other training provider as part of a study programme (for students aged 16 to 19) or as a standalone qualification (for adults aged 19 and above). Training may be delivered through a mixture of classroom-based activity and simulated workplace environments, for example workshops.</p>
Community learning	<p>Community learning is funded through the AEB. It develops the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress towards formal learning or employment and/or</li> <li>• improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or</li> <li>• develop stronger communities</li> </ul> <p>Please see <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2019-to-2020">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2019-to-2020</a> for more information.</p>
Core aim	<p>For learners aged 16 to 19 on a study programme, the core aim is the main activity in a learner’s programme. It must be a learning aim so that it can be recorded in the ILR or school census. The core aim determines whether the programme is academic or vocational.</p>

Term	Definition
	<p>For more information, please see:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-rates-and-formula">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-rates-and-formula</a></p>
<p>Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)</p>	<p>The ESFA is an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Education. It is accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults.</p> <p>For more information, please see  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency</a>.</p>
<p>ESFA approved qualifications for public funding</p>	<p>The ESFA applies sets of principles to decide whether individual qualifications can be approved for public funding. Qualification offers can have separate approval principles, and individual qualifications may meet any or none of them.</p>
<p>European Social Fund (ESF)</p>	<p>The European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programme is part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme for England in 2014-2020. The Programme's priorities are to increase labour market participation, promote social inclusion and develop the skills of the potential and existing workforce. It contributes to improving youth employment by providing support for young people who are harder to reach, and incorporates the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) money in areas with higher rates of youth unemployment.</p> <p>For more information, please see:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/england-2014-to-2020-european-structural-and-investment-funds">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/england-2014-to-2020-european-structural-and-investment-funds</a></p>
<p>ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19</p>	<p>The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19, gives you information about which qualifications are approved for funding for students who are at least aged 14 but are not yet 19.</p> <p>The ESFA approves each qualification in accordance with its suitability for students in the following age categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-16</li> <li>• 16 to 18</li> <li>• 18+</li> </ul> <p>Further information can be found at  <a href="https://section96.education.gov.uk/">https://section96.education.gov.uk/</a>.</p>
<p>Full level 2</p>	<p>Five GCSEs, each at grade C or above/grade 4 or above, or a Technical Certificate at level 2 that meets the requirements for the</p>

Term	Definition
	2018, 2019 and 2020 16 to 18 school and college performance tables.
Full level 3	Two A Levels, or four AS Levels, or QAA Access to higher education (HE) Diploma at level 3, or either a Tech Level or an Applied General qualification at level 3 that meets the requirements for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 16 to 18 school and college performance tables.
Funded programme groups	A funded programme group combines funded enrolments on types of qualification offers, regardless of which ESFA budget they are funded from.
Individualised Learner Record (ILR)	<p>The further education (FE) and skills sector in England uses the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) to collect data about learners in the sector and the learning undertaken by each of them. The data collected in the ILR is used to ensure that public money distributed through the ESFA is being spent in line with government targets for quality and value for money, for planning, and to make the case for the sector in seeking further funding.</p> <p>For more information, please see:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individualised-learner-record-ilr">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individualised-learner-record-ilr</a></p>
Key stage 4	<p>The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, a pupil's performance is assessed. Key stage 4 refers to education in years 10 and 11 of schools in England (ages 14 to 16), at the end of which most pupils sit GCSEs or equivalent level 1/2 qualifications.</p> <p>See <a href="https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum">https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum</a> for further information.</p>
Legal entitlement offers	<p>The AEB supports three legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners. These are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children's Learning Act 2009, and allow eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade C/grade 4 or higher, and/or</li> <li>• first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or</li> <li>• first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23</li> </ul> <p>For more information, please see:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2019-to-2020">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2019-to-2020</a></p>

Term	Definition
Level 3 and below	<p>This phrase refers to post-16 qualifications at levels 3, 2, 1 and entry level.</p> <p>Most qualifications have a difficulty level. The higher the level, the more difficult the qualification is.</p> <p>For more information, see: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean">https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean</a>.</p>
Local flexibility offer	<p>Local flexibility is tailored learning for adults, to respond to local skills and community needs. This is to support colleges and training organisations working with adults at lower levels, who want to re-engage with learning and/or their local labour market. Within local flexibility, colleges and training organisations can deliver non-regulated learning.</p> <p>Find our more from:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-getting-approval-for-funding/legal-entitlements-and-qualification-eligibility-principles-within-in-the-adult-education-budget">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-getting-approval-for-funding/legal-entitlements-and-qualification-eligibility-principles-within-in-the-adult-education-budget</a></p>
Ofqual	<p>The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. It was set up in April 2010 under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and is also covered by the Education Act 2011.</p> <p>Ofqual is a non-ministerial government department with jurisdiction in England. See <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual</a> for further information.</p>
Pre-16	<p>Qualifications approved only for pre 16 on the <a href="#">ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19</a></p>
Performance tables	<p>DfE’s school and college performance tables are published annually, reporting key stage 2 results for primary schools in December; GCSE and equivalent results for secondary schools (provisional results in October and revised results in late January); and A Levels and other 16 to 18 results for schools and colleges in late January and March. School and college performance tables provide a reliable, accessible source of comparative information on pupil attainment and progress.</p>
Pre-existing Tech Levels and AGQs	<p>Tech Levels and Applied General Qualifications (AGQs) at level 3 that last appeared in the 16-19 performance tables for 2016 or 2017, based on the most current published edition of the tables for each year</p>

Term	Definition
Qualification	The term 'qualification' in this document means only qualifications that are regulated by Ofqual.
Qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 or below	<p>A subset of ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19, which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approved for 16 to 18 and/or 18+ at July 2018</li> <li>• at level 3 or below</li> </ul>
Redeveloped Tech Levels and AGQs	Tech Levels and AGQs at level 3 that meet the size, content, grading, and assessment criteria to be included in 16-19 performance tables from 2018 onwards, based on the most current published edition of the tables for each year
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)	<p>The RQF provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Qualifications are indexed by their level and size. Ofqual maintains a register that provides more detail on each qualification.</p> <p>See <a href="https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/">https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/</a> for further information.</p>
Sainsbury Review	<p>The Independent Panel on Technical Education, chaired by Lord Sainsbury, reported its findings in April 2016. The recommendations were accepted in the Post-16 Skills Plan and form the basis for technical education reforms.</p> <p>See the Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education</a>.</p>
School census	<p>The school census is a statutory data collection that takes place during the autumn, spring and summer terms. The census collects information about individual pupils and about the schools themselves.</p> <p>For more information, please see: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc">https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc</a></p>
Study programme	<p>All 16 to 19 year old students in England are funded for an individual study programme. Study programmes have a core aim, are tailored to each student, have clear study and/or employment goals reflecting the student's prior attainment, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial qualifications</li> <li>• mathematics and English for students who have not achieved grade A* to C or 9 to 4 at GCSE in these subjects</li> <li>• high quality work experience or work preparation</li> <li>• added value non-qualification activity that supports the students' goals and is integrated into the study programme</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
Technical Awards	<p>Technical Awards are level 1 and level 2 qualifications in non-English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects that equip students with applied knowledge not usually acquired through general education. They focus on applied study of a sector or occupational group, including the acquisition of associated practical or technical skills where appropriate. These qualifications are included in DfE's secondary (key stage 4) performance tables.</p>
Tech Levels	<p>These are level 3 technical qualifications that are recognised by employers. They are for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry, occupation or technical role. They equip a student with specialist knowledge and skills, enabling entry to an apprenticeship or other employment, or progression to a related higher education course. In some cases, these qualifications provide a 'licence to practise' or exemption from professional exams. They are included in DfE's 16 to 18 school and college performance tables.</p>
Technical Certificates (Tech Certs)	<p>These are level 2 technical qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry, occupation or technical role. They cover occupations where employers recognise entry at level 2 or where a level 2 qualification is required before students can progress to a Tech Level. They equip students with specialist knowledge and skills, enabling entry to an apprenticeship, employment or progression to a Tech Level. In some cases, they provide a 'licence to practise' or exemption from professional exams. They are included in DfE's 16 to 18 school and college performance tables.</p>
Traineeships	<p>A traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience that and prepares young people for their future careers by helping them to become 'work ready'.</p> <p>Traineeships are designed to help young people aged 16 to 24 who don't yet have the appropriate skills or experience. They provide the essential work preparation training, English, maths and work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment.</p> <p>For more information, please see:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/traineeships">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/traineeships</a></p>

## Methodology

### Level 3 and below overview

The estimates relate to a snapshot of activities at the end of the calendar year, and are based on academic age, defined as 'age at the start of the academic year'.

Information is drawn together from various post-16 data sources, including the school census and the Individualised Learning Record (ILR), to give a coherent and comprehensive picture of participation, including schools, further education, apprenticeships and higher education.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-neet>.

### Student analysis

The 16 to 18 analysis is based on the DfE Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD). This records information on the highest level of attainment and qualification studied each academic year matched to individual personal characteristics, as recorded in the school census at age 15. Detailed information on the YPMAD can be found in the [16-19 attainment technical document](#).

This analysis covers learners in the state sector at academic age 15 and the pupil characteristics are taken from the school census that year.

The highest study aim at academic age 16 to 18 in 2016 to 2017 is analysed and grouped on different characteristics, as recorded in the census at age 15. The 'highest study aim', is the highest level of qualification an individual is studying.

Overall GCSE or other level 2, as well as English and mathematics, prior attainment is also analysed. This is based on GCSE/level 2 attainment in 2015 to 2016 to take into account those who did not achieve these at age 15 but did so before 2016 to 2017.

Given the analysis is only based on highest study aim without consideration of detailed subjects studied, it is necessarily based on simplistic rules and is only intended to provide an indication of proportions affected by changes to the post-16 system.

The adult (age 19+) analysis is based on the Individualised Learner Records (ILR) dataset. This is the information about students and the learning they undertake, in the further education (FE) and skills sector, that publicly funded colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers (FE providers) must collect and return to

the DfE. The data source for this analysis is the final collection of 2016 to 2017 and includes information on provision for the full academic year. In this analysis, students are counted once, having been organised via a hierarchy based on the notional level and aim type of their highest aim. The data is then analysed to show the learning aims of adults split by age groups: 19-24, 25-49 and 50+.

## Qualification analysis

The ESFA approves qualifications for government funding for students aged 14 to 19, by age: pre-16, 16 to 18, and 18+. For the qualifications analysis, we considered qualifications approved for funding for 16 to 19 at level 3 or below at July 2018.

These qualifications were also compared with those qualifications that were approved for funding for other qualification offers, at July 2018, including:

- Pre 16
- Qualifications approved for funding through the AEB (excluding traineeships) including
  - local flexibility offer
  - level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement offer
  - English and maths legal entitlement offer
- Qualifications designated for advanced learner loans (loans)
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- Qualifications available as part of traineeships for pre-19 and post-19
- Qualifications available as part of apprenticeship frameworks, but not apprenticeship standards

Community learning has the same qualification offer as AEB (excluding traineeships), therefore has not been compared separately

We also analysed specific types of qualifications: pre-existing and redeveloped Tech Levels and AGQs.

## Enrolments

Enrolment information is full year data from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the school census, for the funding years 2015 to 2016, and 2016 to 2017. Enrolments in 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017 were compared with the qualifications approved for 16 to 19 at level 3 or below at July 2018, pre-existing and redeveloped Tech Levels and AGQs.

Enrolments in each year are split by funded programme groups. This information comes from the ILR, unless stated otherwise.

- Advanced learner loans (loans) – Number of enrolments on qualifications for which a learner has taken out a loan.
- Apprenticeship framework – Number of enrolments on qualifications that students study as part of apprenticeship frameworks. This applies to both 16 to 18 apprenticeships and 19+ apprenticeships.
- Apprenticeship standards – Number of enrolments on qualifications that students study as part of apprenticeship standards. This applies to both 16 to 18 apprenticeships and 19+ apprenticeships. These qualifications can be mandated on-programme qualifications or non-mandated qualifications.
- Community learning – Number of enrolments on qualifications that students study as part of community learning, which are funded through the AEB.
- European Social Fund (ESF) – Number of enrolments on qualifications funded through the ESF.
- Level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement – Number of enrolments on level 2 and level 3 qualifications that are fully funded through AEB for students aged 19 to 23, who are studying their first full level 2 or level 3. We have only counted those enrolments where providers have earned full funding for delivering this learning.
- Remainder of the AEB – Number of enrolments on other qualifications where providers earned funding for delivering learning through the AEB at level 2 and below. These qualifications can be fully- or co-funded, based on the qualification being taken and characteristics of the student. This information excludes enrolments funded through traineeships, community learning, and the level 2 and level 3 legal entitlement.
- Study programmes – Number of enrolments on qualifications that students take as part of a study programme in the 16 to 19 funding methodology. These students are funded by the ESFA, so have met the qualifying period for funding. This information comes from the ILR and school census data, and excludes traineeships. In the school census data, these students are in Year 12 or above (aged 16 at the start of the academic year). In the ILR data, these students are aged 16 to 19, or aged 19 and above while completing their study programme. Within study programmes, we have:
  - included students aged 14 to 16 who are directly enrolled on qualifications funded by ESFA
  - included students aged 19 to 24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA)
  - excluded students who are home educated
- Traineeships – Number of enrolments on qualifications that are studied as part of a traineeship programme. This information includes 16 to 18 traineeships and 19 to 24 traineeships.

Where enrolments are covering all of the above funded programme groups this is referred to as 'all funded programme groups'.



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