

January 2004/01  
**Guide**

This is the fifth annual edition of 'Regional profiles of higher education' and the first web only version. As in previous years, the report sets out a range of data on the pattern of higher education in each of the nine regions in England.

# Regional profiles of higher education 2003

# Regional profiles of higher education 2003

## Introduction

1. This is the fifth annual edition of our 'Regional profiles' of higher education (HE) and the first web only version. As in previous years, the report sets out a range of data on the pattern of HE in each of the nine regions in England.

2. The regional dimension of higher education continues to grow in importance. HE retains its core academic and intellectual purposes of supporting student learning and undertaking research. These can transcend geographical boundaries. But there is increasing recognition that higher education institutions (HEIs) do not operate in isolation from the communities in which they are located. On the contrary, they are powerful instruments for promoting the economic, social and cultural welfare and development of their localities, their regions, and the nation as a whole. As the regions gain in significance as a focus for economic and social regeneration and development activity – particularly through the work of Regional Development Agencies and other regional partners – appreciation of the regional contribution of HEIs increases correspondingly.

3. We published in March 2001 a policy statement for consultation on our approach to regional issues in higher education<sup>1</sup>. This invited views on whether we are correctly articulating the regional dimension for HE, and whether there were more or different actions that we could usefully take. Respondents generally welcomed the policy statement and a number of useful suggestions for further action were made<sup>2</sup>.

4. It was felt that the HEFCE had correctly interpreted the regional agenda and was reflecting this appropriately in its programmes and policies. There was widespread agreement that HEFCE should leave it to the discretion of each institution and region to determine their own priorities. Respondents also suggested a need to bring other partners more fully into evolving collaborations. Over the past two years, this need has been reflected in our engagement with regional bodies, and in our continued support to the regional consortia of HEIs.

5. The DfES White Paper on the future of higher education, published in January 2003, reinforced the critical importance of universities and colleges to regional development. In turn, the aims of the White Paper closely align with HEFCE's strategic vision for widening participation and fair access, enhancing excellence in learning and teaching, enhancing excellence in research, and enhancing the contribution of HE to the economy and society. We are in turn committed to ensuring regional equity in each of these, at the same time acknowledging that each region has its own 'unique selling point', and without losing sight of the need for world-class excellence.

6. In March 2003 we published the second of our surveys of interactions between HE and business, which again reflects the growing importance of the contribution HEIs make to regional and local economic developments<sup>3</sup>. The survey included data on such topics as the extent of collaborative research, intellectual property, consultancy, spin-off firms, regeneration and engagement with employers.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Higher education and the regions: HEFCE policy statement' (HEFCE 01/18). All HEFCE publications are available on our web-site [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) or in hard copy

<sup>2</sup> 'Responses to consultation on the HEFCE policy statement: higher education and the regions', available on the web with HEFCE 01/18

<sup>3</sup> 'Higher education-business interaction survey' (HEFCE 2003/11)

7. In December 2001, jointly with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), we published a consultation document on 'Partnerships for Progression', now known as Aimhigher: Partnerships for Progression<sup>4</sup>. This proposed a campaign to widen and increase the participation of 18-30 year-olds in HE. The basis for the campaign is a joint approach that relies on comprehensive partnerships, including local LSCs, HEIs, further education colleges, training providers, schools and other partners. This work continues, as part of a commitment to increasing the numbers of young people accessing higher education, which in turn forms part of the needs of the employment market for 'high valued added' skills in a competitive global economy. But numbers of students are only part of the story; there must be equal commitment to enabling access to education across all social groups, and in keeping with geographical demand across the English regions. As part of this, we at HEFCE continue to support the growth of HE provision in areas where access to HE might be difficult.

8. Aimhigher: Partnerships for Progression is perhaps the most tangible current example of collaboration at the regional level. There are many others. We consult with regional partners on the allocation of additional student numbers and the assessment of bids for 'third stream' funding, such as the Higher Education Innovation Fund<sup>5</sup>, the Active Community Fund and New Technology Institutes<sup>6</sup>. These initiatives strengthen the contribution which HEIs and further education colleges make to economic development through promotion of a learning society and a knowledge-based economy.

9. In the current environment we are seeing the levels of engagement with regional partners continuing to grow. We face the challenge of ensuring that the full range of HE services – excellent learning and teaching, research, links with business and the community, and widening participation – is provided within each region. This policy aim will mean greater collaboration between HE and FE providers and with the full range of regional stakeholders.

10. All this needs to be underpinned by accurate and extensive information about the regional role of HE. We hope that this report will contribute to this and continue to inform the shaping and implementation of policy.

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Partnerships for Progression: proposals by the HEFCE and the Learning and Skills Council' (HEFCE 01/73)

<sup>5</sup> 'Higher Education Innovation Fund: invitation to apply for special funding' (HEFCE 01/34)

<sup>6</sup> 'New Technology Institutes: invitation to bid for funds' (HEFCE 01/47)

# Background to higher education

1. Higher education in England takes place in a wide variety of institutions. The three main types are universities, higher education colleges and further education colleges.
2. Higher education courses are generally above the standard of GCE A-levels or National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3. They include foundation and first degree courses, postgraduate courses and Higher National Diplomas and Certificates. However students whose sole qualification aim is an NVQ have not been included in this document.

## Universities and higher education colleges

3. Publicly funded universities and higher education colleges carry out teaching, research and a wide range of other activities. These institutions are referred to as 'higher education institutions', or collectively as the 'higher education sector'. There are 132 HEIs in England. There are also some privately funded universities and colleges that are not included in the HE sector.

## The Open University

4. The Open University provides distance-learning courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level throughout the UK. The university's headquarters is in Milton Keynes, but it also has regional offices throughout the country. In the regional comparison charts, we have shown the home region of Open University students in England. There is also a table of the number of Open University students living in the region on the 'Learning in the region' page of each chapter.
5. Although the headquarters of the Open University is in the South-East, we have **not** included the Open University in any of the aggregated statistics for the South-East, as its activities and students are nationwide.
6. The Open University is by far the largest provider of distance-learning courses, but it is not the only one. Campus-based institutions also provide some distance learning.

## Further education colleges

7. Further education is for people over the minimum school leaving age (16 years). Further education courses are generally up to the standard of GCE A-levels or NVQ Level 3, and take place in a sixth-form college, a further education college (FEC) or a higher education institution rather than in a secondary school.
8. In 2001-02, there were 412 further education colleges in England; many of these offered higher education courses. Of these, 146 will receive funding from HEFCE for their 2003-04 HE activity. Such funding is either distributed directly to the college or through a funding consortium. In addition some colleges teach students registered at HEIs with whom they have a collaborative arrangement.

## Collaborative agreements

9. Students are taught by collaborative arrangement when they are registered at one institution, but taught at another institution. Most collaborative arrangements are between a higher education institution and a further education college, where the HEI receives funding for the students and is responsible for quality assurance, and the FEC teaches the student. A proportion of the funding is passed on to the college providing the teaching. In any given year the arrangement can cover the whole or part of the course.
10. In all but the 'Learning in the region' page, this publication shows the students, together with associated funding, **with the HEI where the students are registered**. Therefore, students taught collaboratively at a college in another region are included in the statistics of the region in which the registering HEI is based.

11. The extent to which students are registered in one region and are studying or taught in others is illustrated by the 'Learning in the region' page of each chapter.

12. The numbers of students taught by collaborative agreement at FECs in each region is provided under the heading 'Major FE providers of HE'. It should be treated with caution as the data may be incomplete: only those students recorded as taught at an FEC are included, while a substantial number of collaboratively taught students are recorded as taught by an unknown institution.

### **Funding consortia**

13. Funding consortia generally comprise a cluster of FECs and an HEI. There is a lead institution through which HEFCE funding flows. Eleven consortia, comprising 51 institutions, will be funded in 2003-04.

14. Only the 'HEFCE funding' charts in this publication show consortia funding together with the lead institution of the consortium. Unless otherwise specified, charts and tables of student numbers and characteristics are based on the region of the student's registering institution. In order to do this for the overall student numbers on the first data page of each region, estimates were made of the number of consortia-funded students registered at FECs in each region. These numbers are likely to be less than the actual numbers of consortia-funded students registered at FECs because they refer to 'home and EC fundable' students only, and therefore do not include non-fundable, or Island and overseas students.

### **Multiple campuses**

15. Many higher education institutions have more than one campus. The regional maps illustrate major campuses located a significant distance from the institution's main site.

16. Where institutions have significant student populations on campuses in another region, this is indicated in a footnote to the chart showing full-time equivalent (FTE) student numbers. All such students (together with distance learning and collaboratively taught students) have been included in the region of the registering institution's main campus in the figures and tables – on all pages other than the 'Learning in the region' page.

### **Student numbers**

17. Where possible we have shown both full-time equivalent student (FTE) numbers and the total number of students regardless of time spent on the course (the 'headcount' measure).

18. The student numbers given on the first data page of each region are collected by HEFCE in December (through the HESSES and HEIFES surveys). They show the number of students attending, and expected to attend, the institution in the current academic year. Sandwich students on their industrial placement are assumed to have an FTE of 0.5, while the FTE for part-time students will vary according to the intensity of the programme.

19. Excluding the Open University, there are some 1,320,000 FTE HE students in England in the current academic year (2002-03): this corresponds to 1,660,000 students in total (headcount). In addition the Open University has almost 70,000 FTE HE English domiciled students, which corresponds to just over 170,000 student headcounts.

## Student characteristics

20. We have illustrated some aspects of the diversity of the student population in each region. These include the mode of study (whether full-time or part-time), the level of qualification the student is studying towards, and the age of the student on entry to the course. We have also shown where young students come from, the subjects studied by HE students, the number of overseas students and students' gender.

21. We have not presented any data on the ethnic origin of students. This is clearly of interest, and will vary considerably between regions, but there is a problem with the data. The information is collected voluntarily, and is incomplete. The differences between institutions in collecting these data could severely distort any comparison of ethnic origin between regions.

22. Several sources were used for the pages on HE student characteristics. Details of all sources are given in Annex A.

## Income to HE institutions

23. Universities and higher education colleges are independent institutions which attract income from a variety of sources, both public and private. This includes: grant from HEFCE; income from tuition fees (including fees from overseas students); grants and contracts for research activity from public, charitable and commercial sources; income from residences and catering; and a wide range of other channels. The total income to English HEIs in 2001-02 was £11.8 billion. Grants from the HE funding bodies accounted for 38 per cent of this total, while 24 per cent came from tuition fees (both public and private), and 17 per cent from research grants and contracts.

## HEFCE funding

24. We use formulae to determine how most of the money is allocated between institutions. These take account of certain factors for each institution, including the number and type of students, the subjects taught, and the amount and quality of research undertaken there. After we determine the amount of funding, it is provided in the form of a 'block grant' which institutions are free to allocate according to their own priorities within our broad guidelines. A full description of our funding methods for teaching and research, as they applied in 2002-03, is given in 'Funding higher education in England: how the HEFCE allocates its funds' (HEFCE 02/18).

25. 'Recurrent grants for 2003-04' (HEFCE 2003/10) states that the HEFCE will distribute the following grants in the next academic year:

- £3,399 million for teaching
- £1,042 million for research
- £47 million to compensate higher education institutions for increase in employers' contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme
- £4 million for provision for flexibility and moderation funding
- £178 million for rewarding, developing and retaining staff in higher education
- £364 million for earmarked capital funding
- £451 million in special funding (funding, usually in support of specific initiatives and capital investment, which is not allocated through the main teaching and research funding formulae).

26. Only a small proportion of special funding and earmarked capital grants were allocated in summer 2003; these are not included in the graphs.

27. The grants for moderation and for rewarding and developing staff have been grouped together in the graphs as 'other grants'.

## **Research assessment**

28. The main purpose of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is to improve the quality of research through the selective allocation of funds according to standards described. The highest grade awarded in the 2001 RAE was 5\* (five star) and the lowest 1. Institutions conducting the best research receive a larger proportion of the grant. The RAE provides judgements of quality on which to base these funding decisions.

29. The RAE is carried out every three to five years. The exercise used to determine the funding reported in this document was in 2001, although the 1996 RAE was used for a supplement to departments that achieved a rating of 5\* in both the 1996 and 2001 RAEs. Assessment is by peer review by panels of experts.

## **Student profile and participation**

30. In the last two decades, the number of higher education students has grown dramatically, and the nature of the student population has changed. Roughly a third of young people now enter higher education, the number of mature students has increased, and women now outnumber men. However, people from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds are still under-represented in higher education.

31. In association with the other UK higher education funding bodies, we published a set of performance indicators in higher education in December 2002 (HEFCE 2002/52). We illustrate in the current report the performance of institutions and regions in respect of two of the indicators – those relating to participation and non-continuation. Additionally, this year, we have included the location adjusted benchmark for the participation index.

32. We have shown the performance of institutions in each region in recruiting young full-time first-degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods; and the percentage of students who did not continue their studies after the first year. As non-completion rates and participation indicators are closely linked, these are shown together and for young full-time degree entrants only.

33. HEFCE is about to publish a detailed report on participation in HE, accompanying that report will be a set of maps showing the participation of young people in full-time higher education for local areas down to the level of ward.

## **Dates**

34. Data and charts have been produced from the most recent reliable data available in summer 2003. Information on student numbers, and their mode and level of study is for the current academic year (2002-03). Breakdowns of students by other characteristics – such as age, gender, subject, home region, and whether or not they are franchised – are from the 2001-02 academic year, as is the 'Learning in the region' page. All details on HEFCE funding relate to allocations for 2003-04. Data on first destinations relate to students graduating in 2001. Population statistics are from 2000. GDP figures are from 2000, while unemployment rates quoted are for the spring of 2002.

## Data sources

35. The main sources of data used in compiling 'Regional profiles' are:

- HEFCE's Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey (HESES)
- HEFCE's Higher Education in Further Education: Students Survey (HEIFES)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record
- HESA Finance Record
- HESA First Destinations Survey
- the Learning and Skills Council's Individualised Student Record (ISR)
- The Office of National Statistics' 'Regional trends 37' and 'Regional competitiveness indicators'.

36. A full description of the data sources is given in Annex A.

## Further reading

37. The following publications provide additional information about higher education and the role of HEFCE.

- 'About the HEFCE' (HEFCE 02/17).
- 'Higher education in the United Kingdom' (HEFCE 01/56).
- 'Funding higher education in England: how HEFCE allocates its funds' (HEFCE 2003/29).
- 'Performance indicators in higher education in the UK' (HEFCE 2002/52).
- 'Recurrent grants for 2003-04' (HEFCE 2003/10).
- 'Evaluating the regional contribution of an HEI: a benchmarking approach' (HEFCE 02/23).

They are available from:

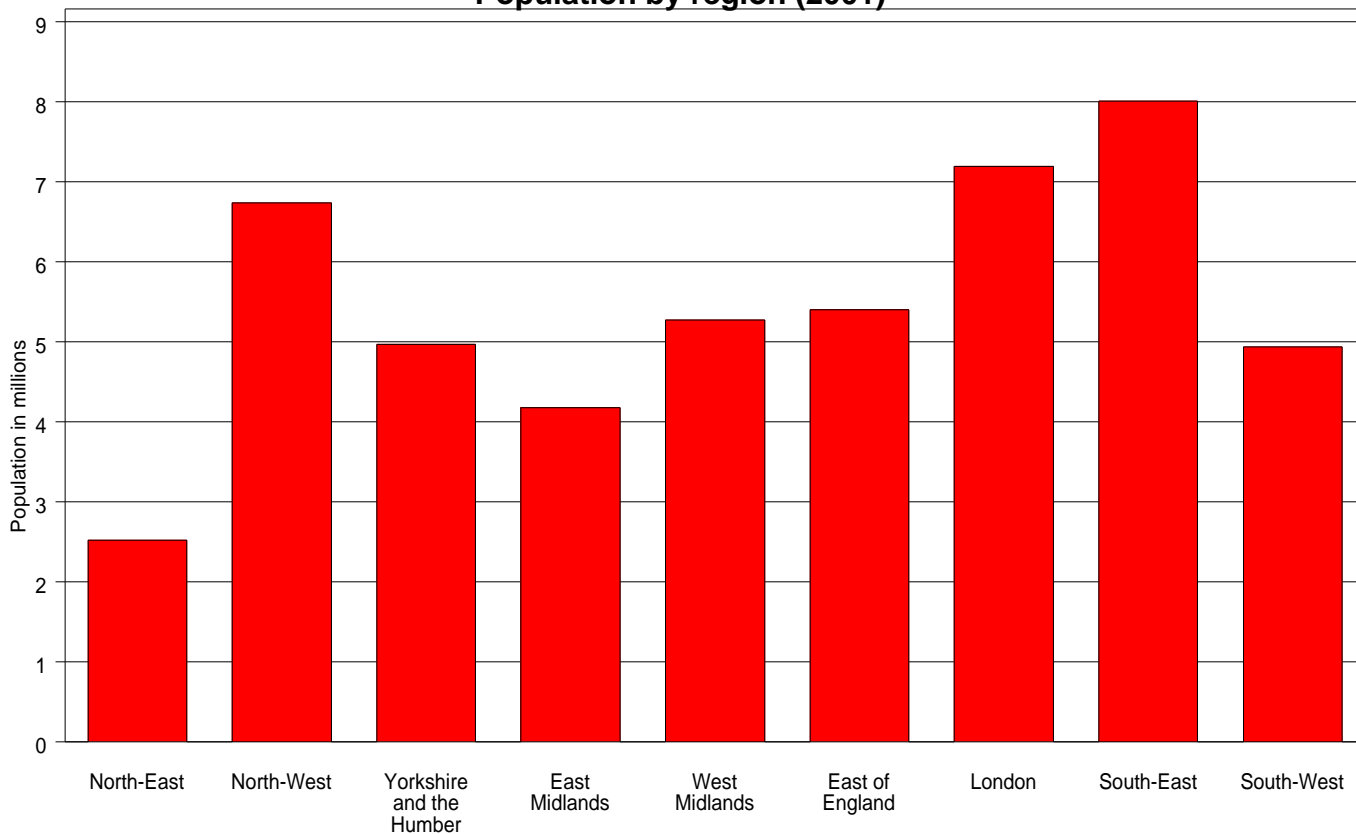
HEFCE Publications  
Northavon House  
Coldharbour Lane  
BRISTOL  
BS16 1QD  
tel 0117 931 7035  
fax 0117 931 7463

e-mail [publications@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:publications@hefce.ac.uk)

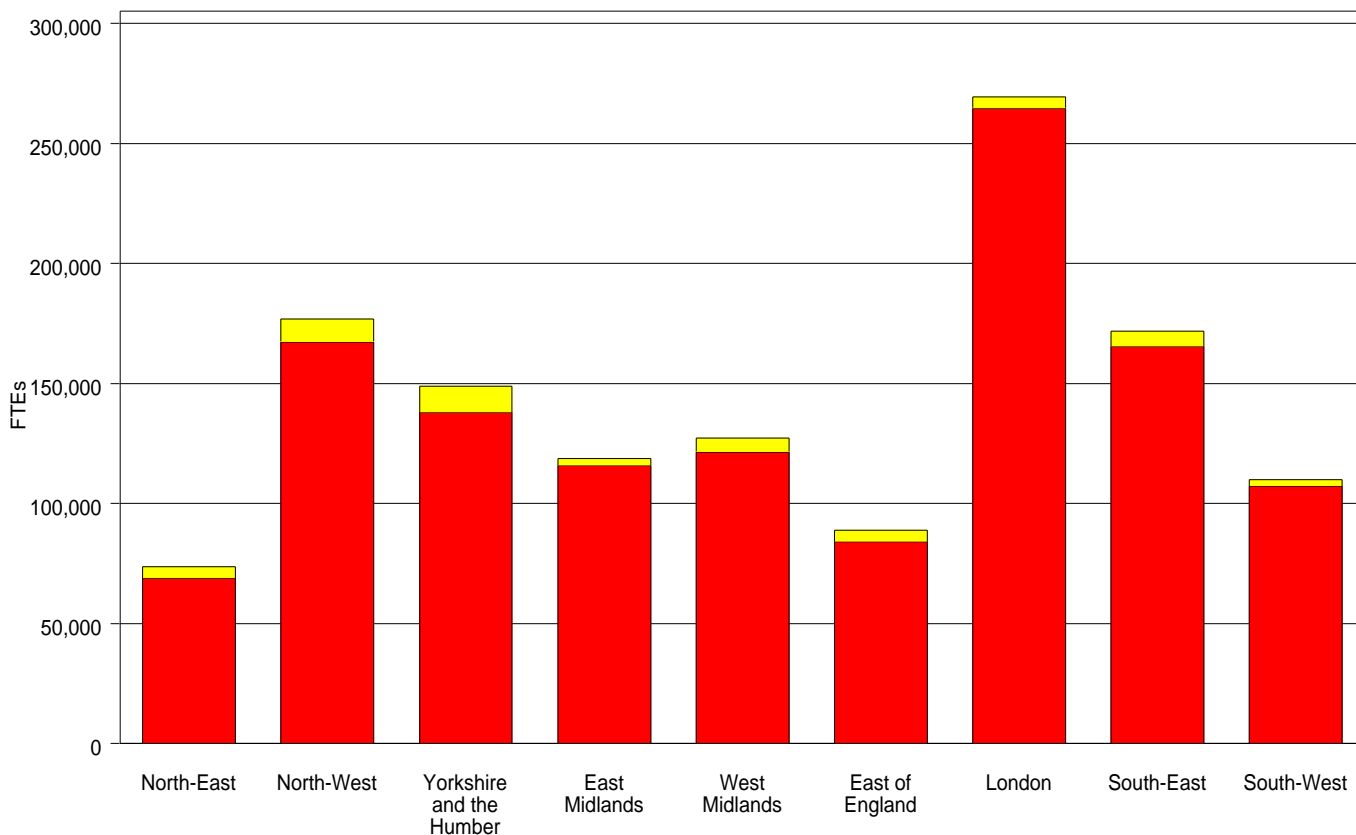
These publications and information about all our activities are available on our web-site ([www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)).



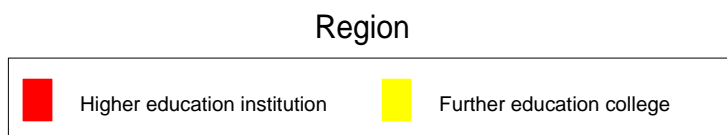
**Population by region (2001)**



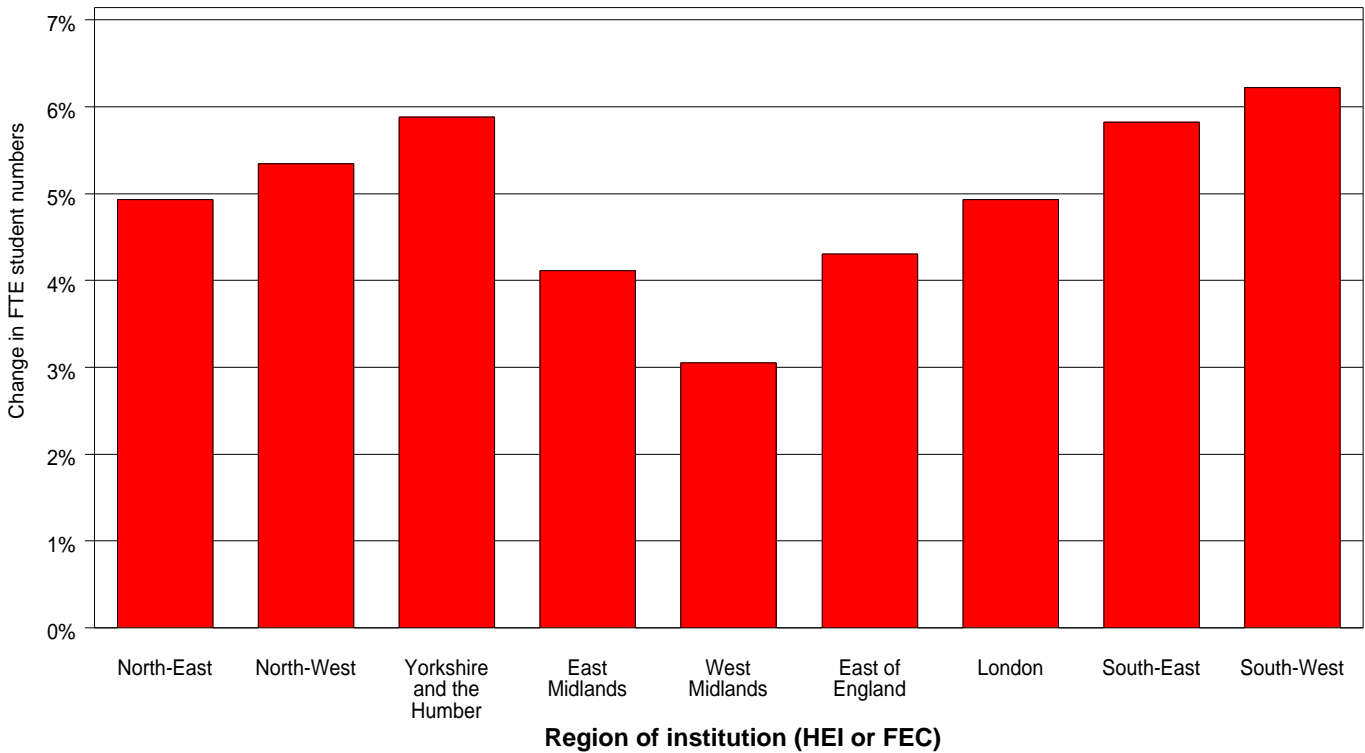
**Region**  
**Full-time equivalent HE student numbers\* (2002-03)**



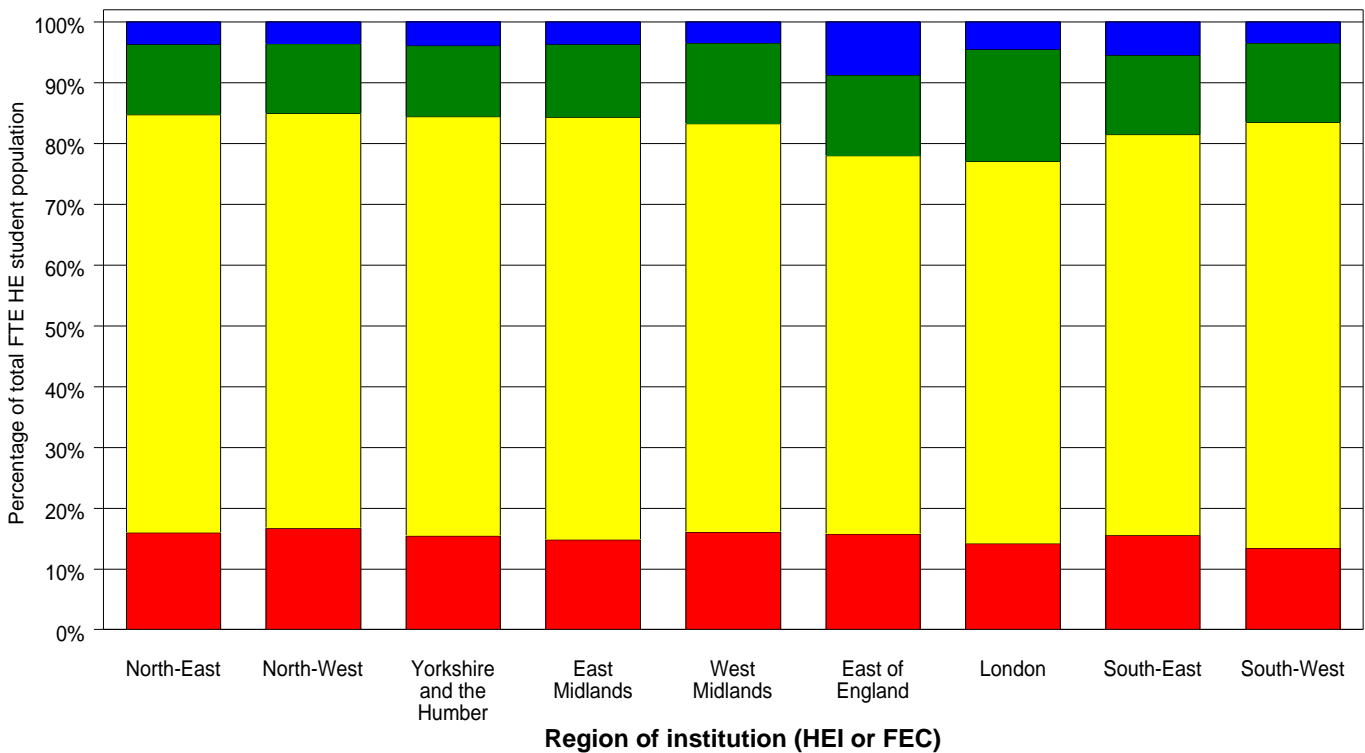
\*Open University students excluded



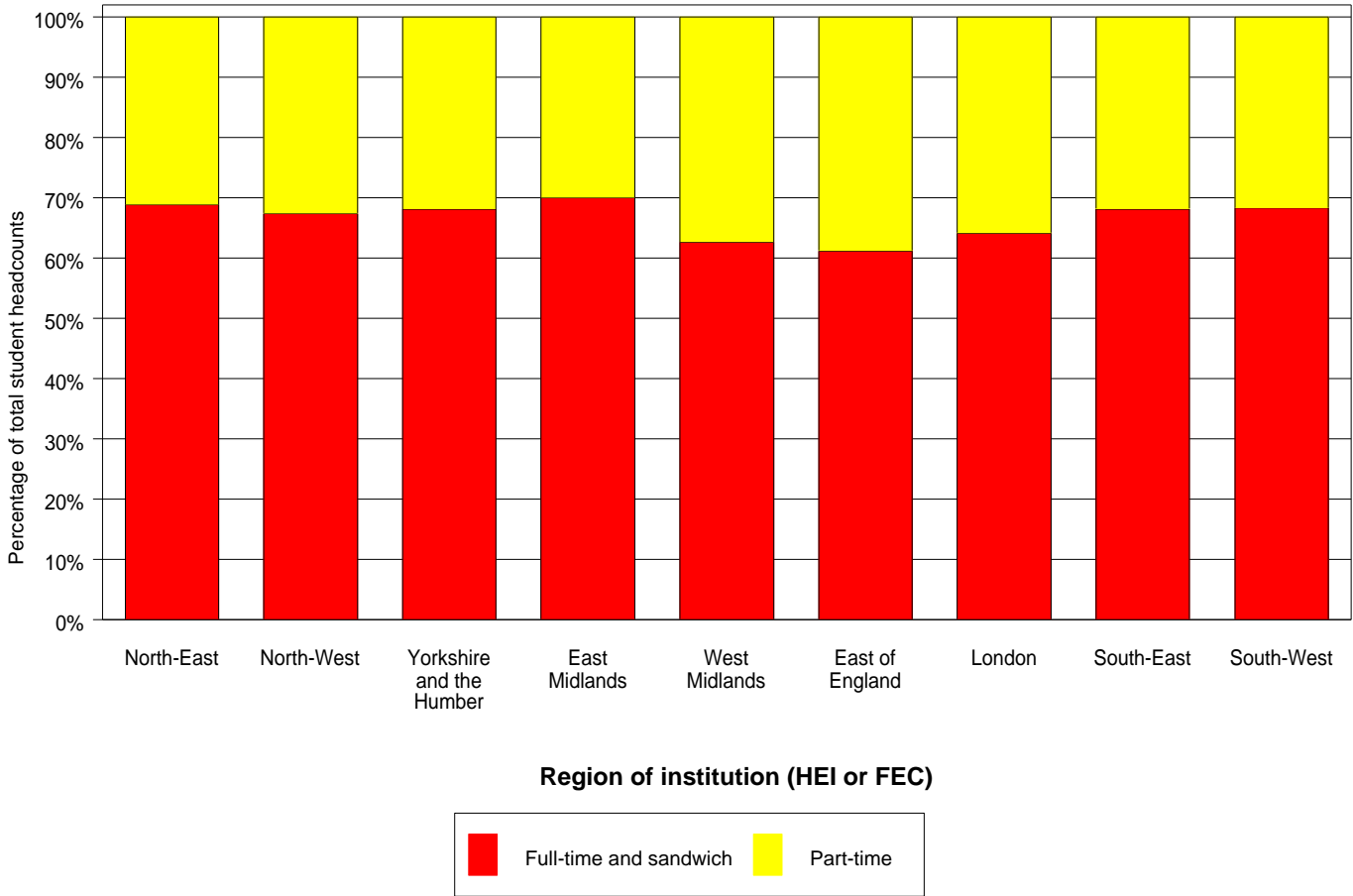
**Percentage change in FTE HE student numbers  
for each region (2001-02 to 2002-03)**



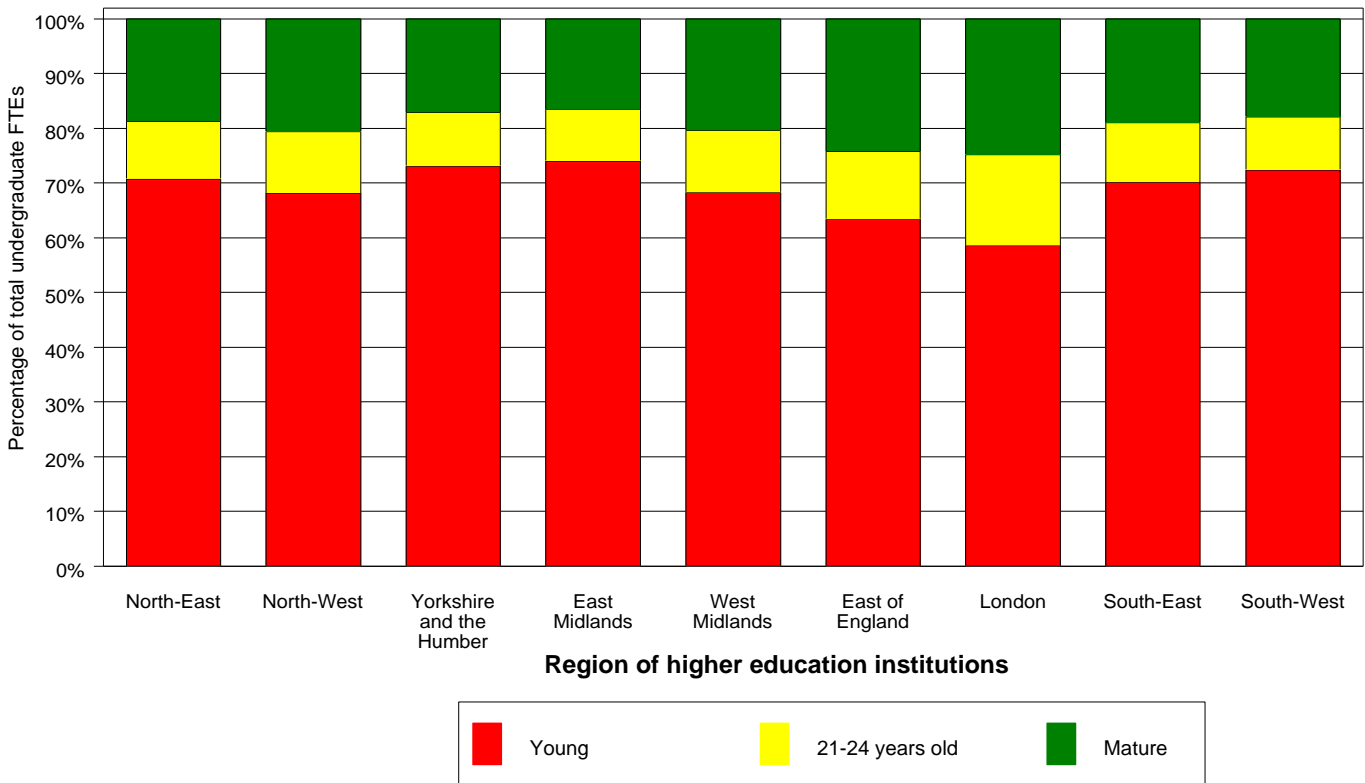
**Students by level of study and region of institution (2002-03)**



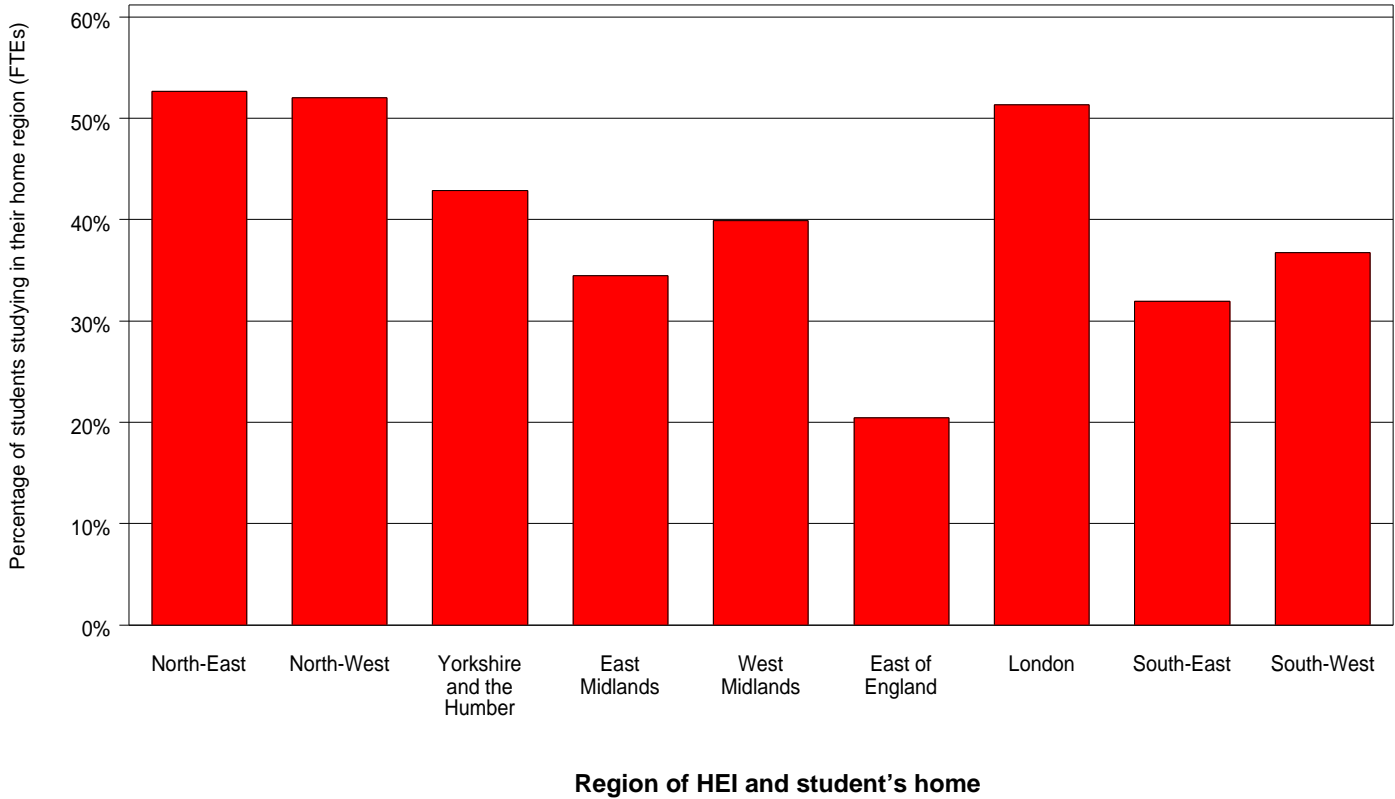
## HE students by mode of study and region of institution (2002-03)



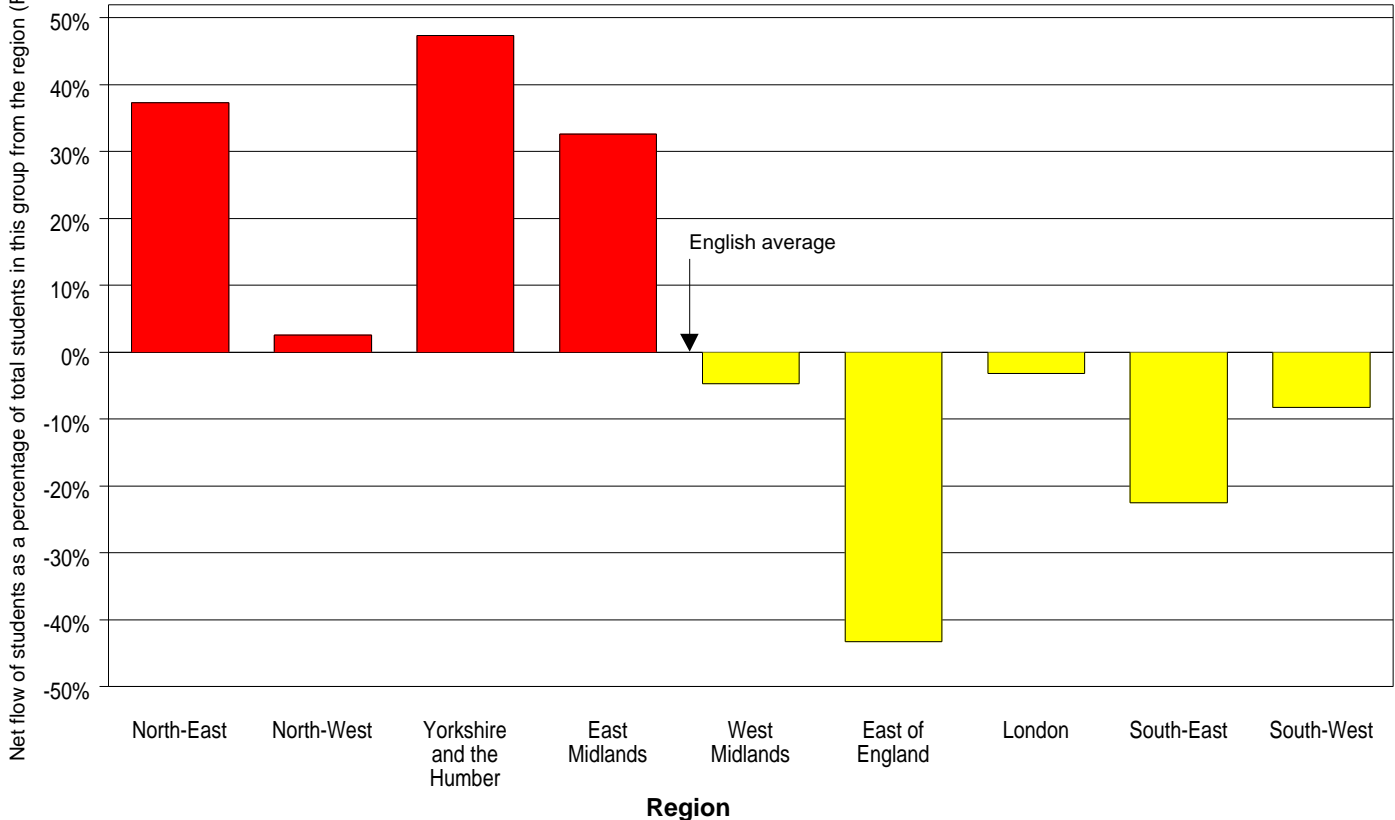
## Undergraduate students: by age on entry (2001-02)



## Percentage of young full-time undergraduates studying at HEIs in their home region (2001-02)

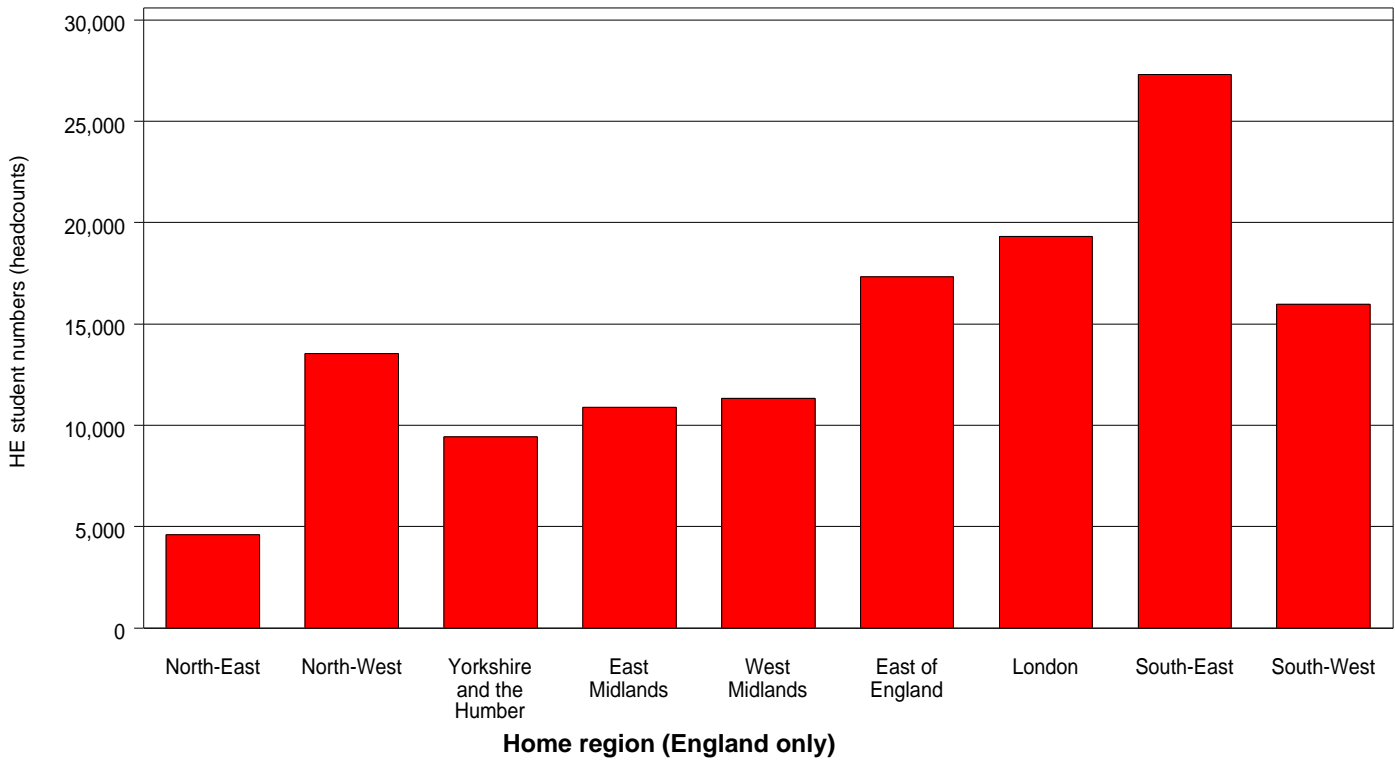


## Flow of young full-time undergraduates into and out of regions: percentage of total students in this group from the region (2001-02)

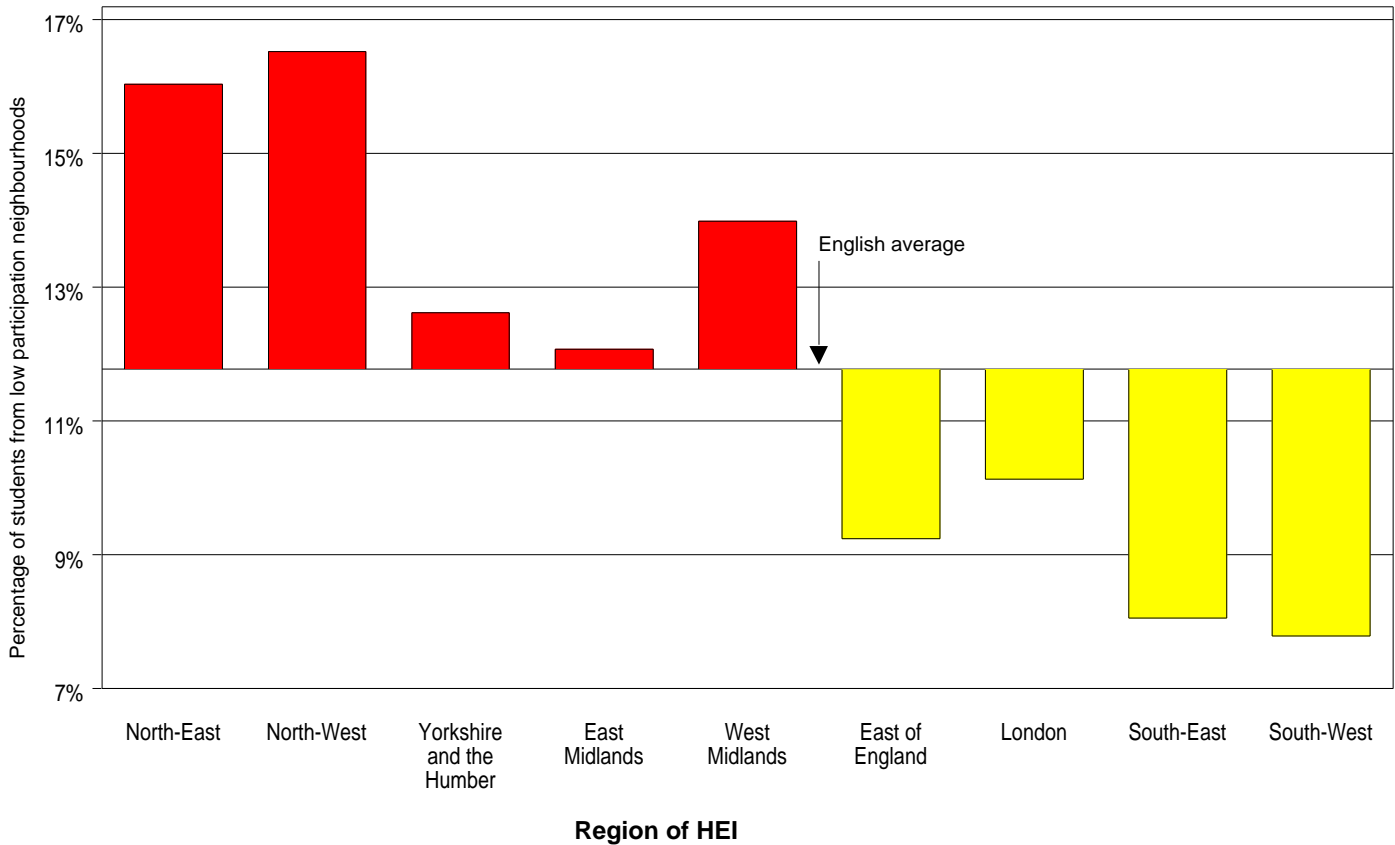


This graph plots the difference between the number of young students entering the region to study at an HEI from elsewhere in the UK, and those leaving the region to study at an HEI elsewhere in the UK. For example, the graph shows that the North-East takes in more young students than it exports to other regions. For every 100 students from the North-East, there are roughly 137 students studying in the North-East; a net gain of 37.

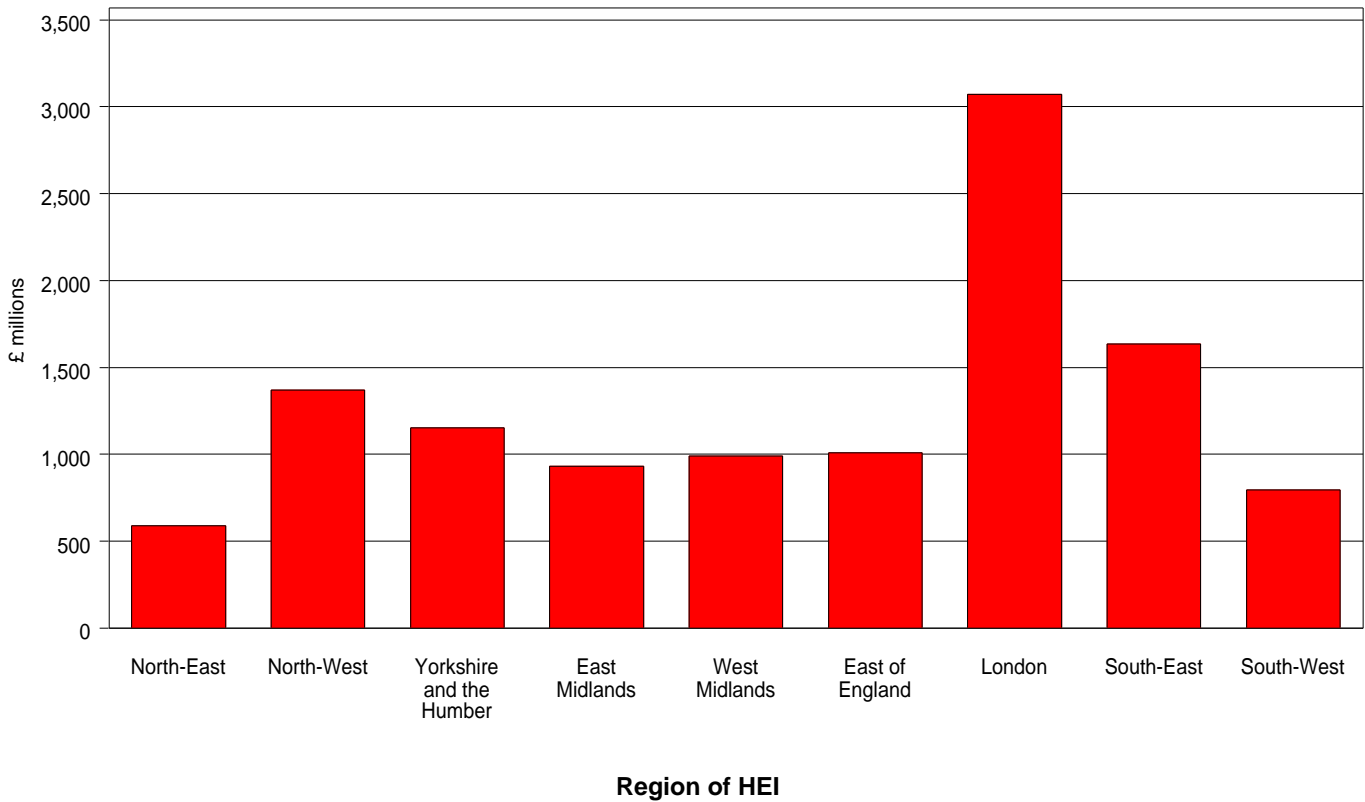
### Home region of Open University students (2001-02)



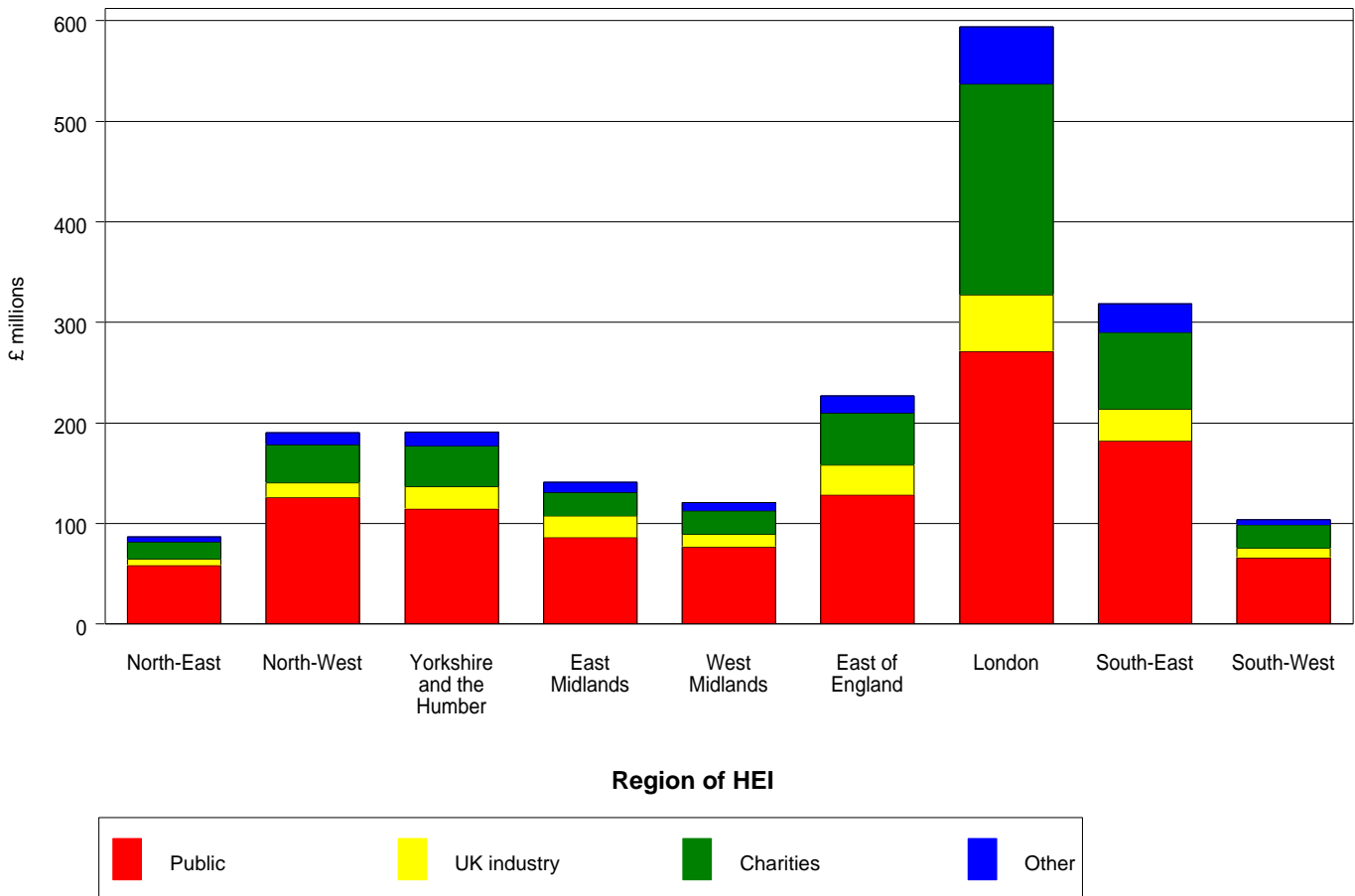
### Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (2000-01)



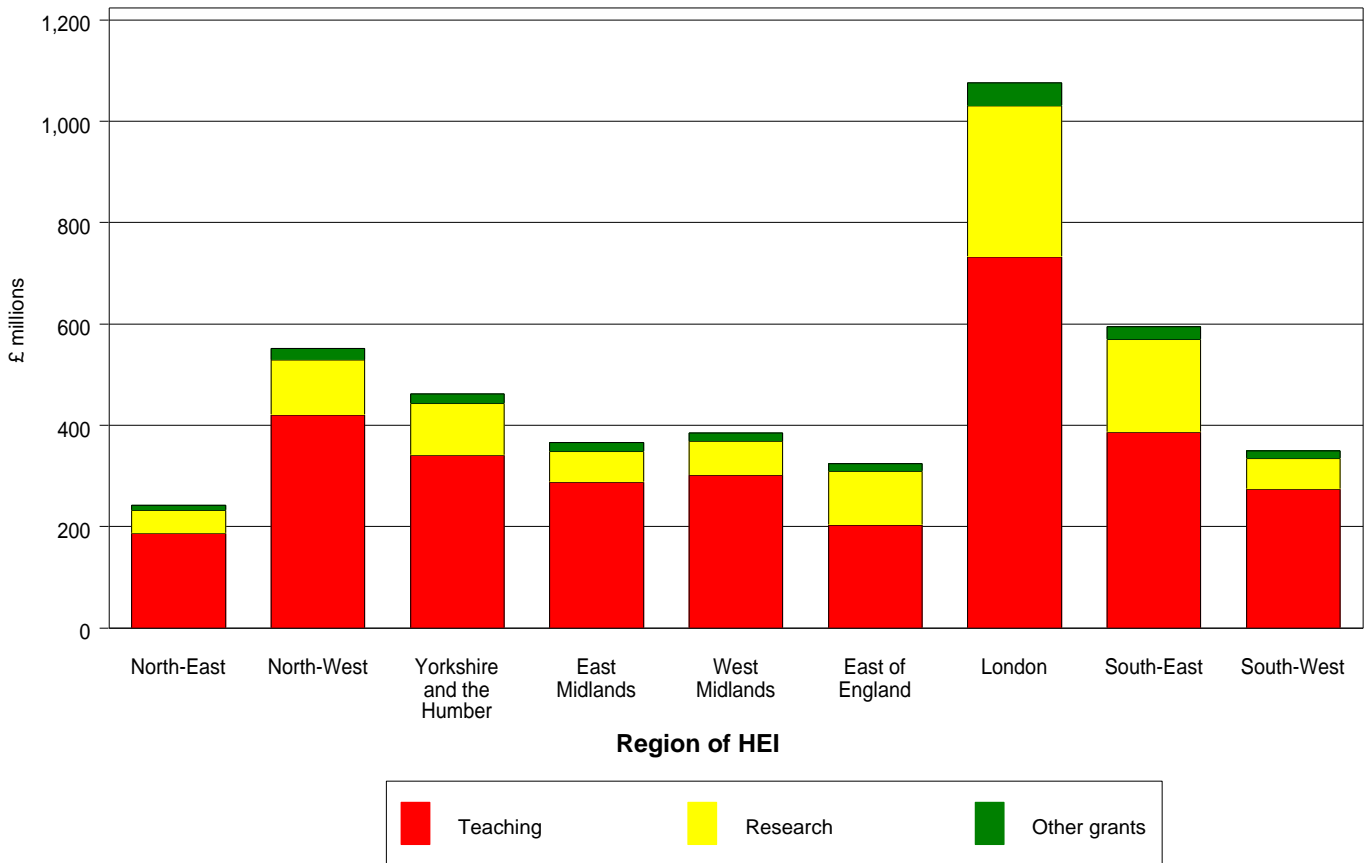
### Total income to HEIs by region (2001-02)



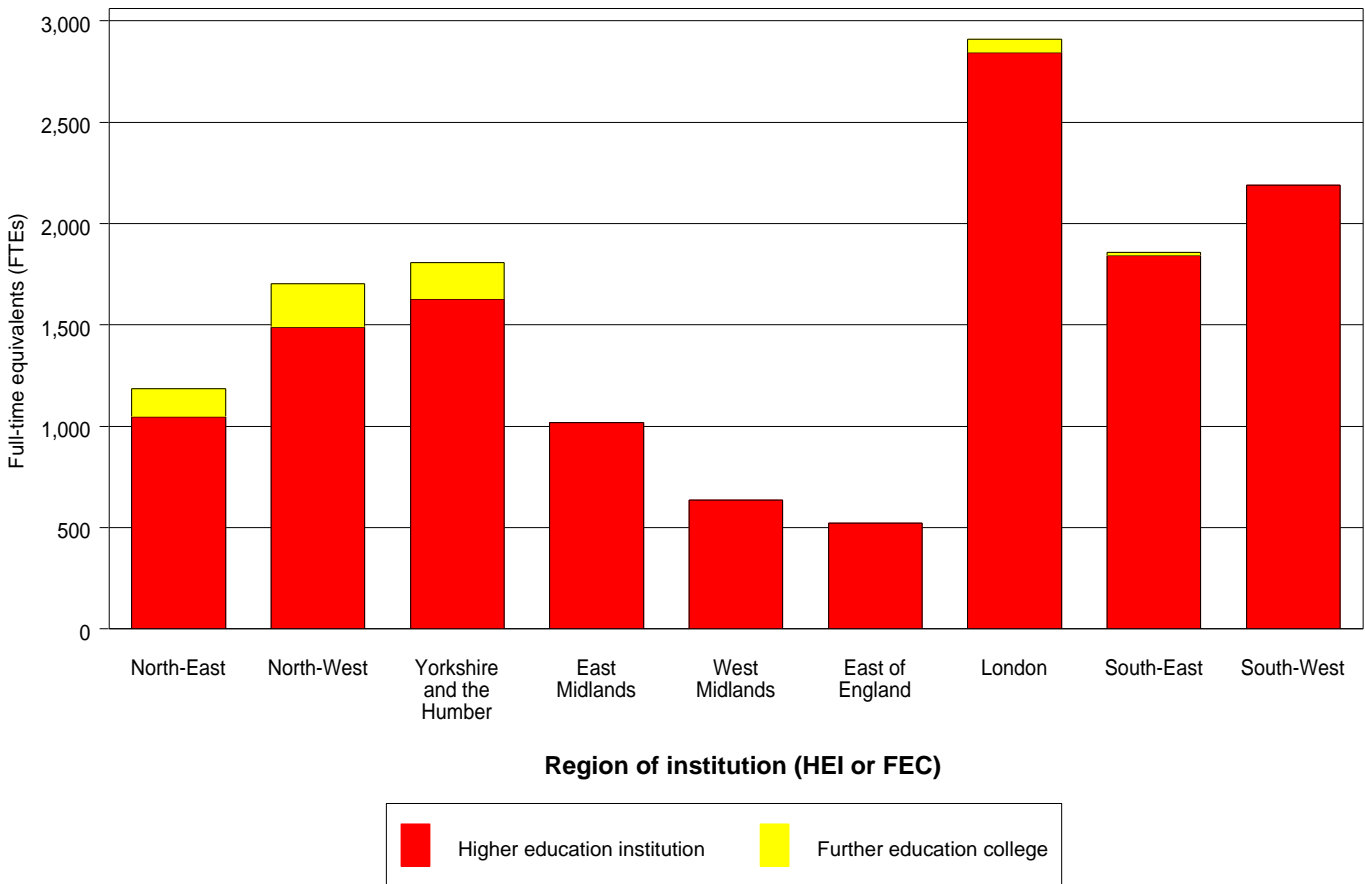
### Research grants and contracts, by source and region of HEI (2001-02)



## HEFCE funding of HEIs by region (2003-04)

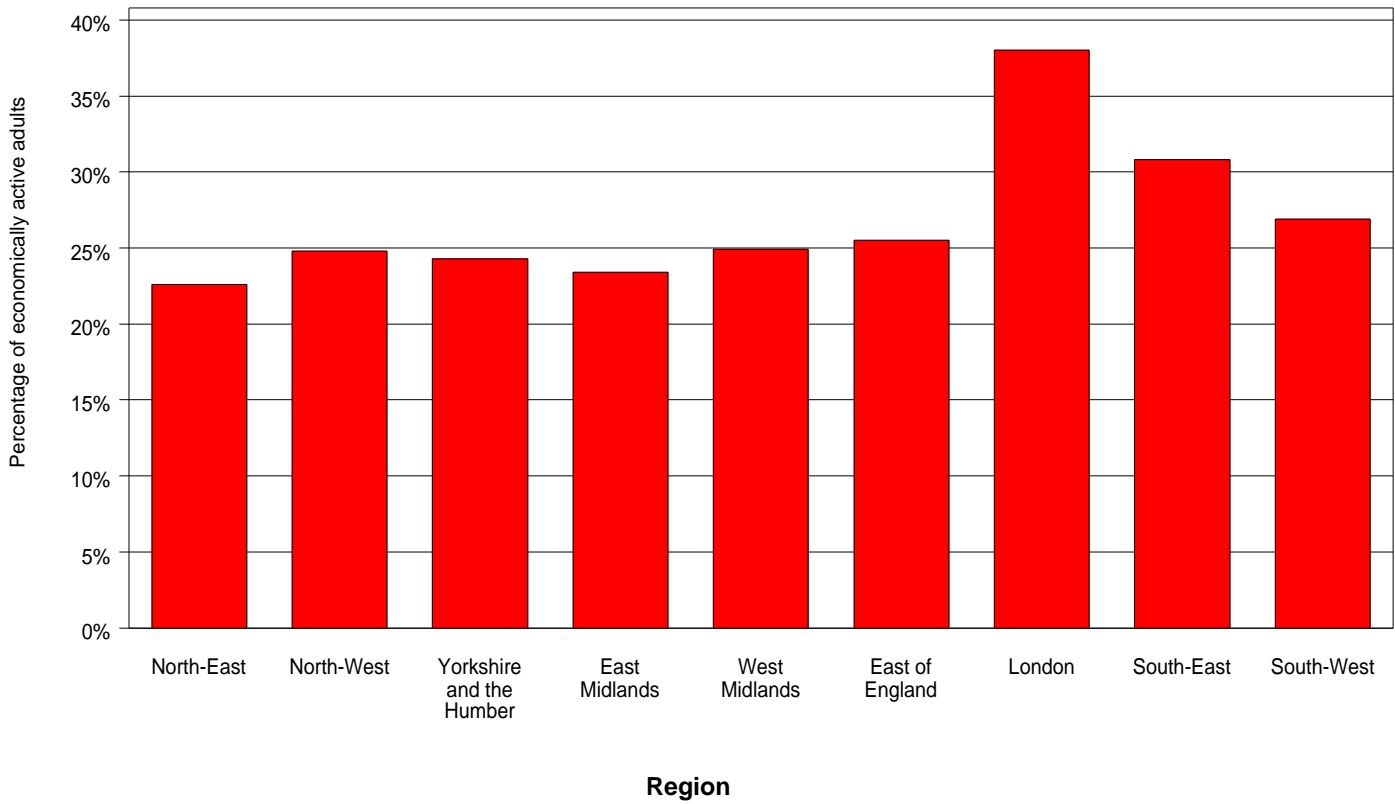


## Additional student FTEs awarded for 2003-04\* to institutions in each region



\*The bids awarded in any given year may be phased in over several years. This chart includes bids awarded in previous years that result in additional student numbers for 2003-04.

### Percentage of economically active adults qualified to at least NVQ level 4 (spring 2002)



### International Labour Organization (ILO) unemployment rate (summer 2002)

