

Higher Education Performance Indicators 2011/12

This Statistical Bulletin presents summary information from the report "Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK 2011/12" published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The HESA publication, along with data for each higher education institution, can be found at <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi>

The indicators are designed to provide reliable information on the nature and performance of the higher education sector in the UK and a consistent set of measures of this performance. The performance indicators broadly cover widening participation, non-continuation rates and outcomes. Indicators relate to higher education institutions in the individual countries of the UK. These tables can also be found on [StatsWales](#), along with breakdowns by individual Welsh institutions.

Summary

- The percentage of first degree entrants from state schools continues to be higher in Wales than from the UK as a whole.
- The proportion from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 is lower in Wales than in England or in the UK as a whole. In previous years this proportion was higher or broadly similar to that in the UK.
- The percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods to Welsh Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was higher than the proportion entering HEIs in England.
- Similarly, the proportion of both young and mature entrants, full-time and part-time, who had no previous higher education qualification and were from low participation neighbourhoods was notably higher at Welsh HEIs than in the UK generally.
- Levels of non-continuation rates amongst both young and mature full-time first degree entrants after their first year were above that for England and the UK as a whole.
- Projected attainment rates for full-time, first degree starters in 2010/11 remained over two percentage points behind England, but showed an improvement on the previous year.

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Widening Participation Indicators, 2011/12

- The percentage of *young* full-time first degree entrants to Welsh HEIs from state schools or colleges was 91.9 per cent, the UK comparable figure was 88.9 per cent. The lower proportion of Welsh independent schools may account for some of the historical discrepancy between Wales and England in this indicator. (Table 1)
- 29.1 per cent of young full-time first degree entrants to Welsh HEIs were from National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) Classes 4 – 7 (see Notes: 3.3 for definition), 1.6 per cent below the total UK figure of 30.7 per cent. In previous years this proportion was higher or broadly similar to that in the UK. (Table 2)
- 11.8 per cent of *young* full-time first degree entrants and 14.4 per cent of *mature* full-time first degree entrants at Welsh HEIs came from **low participation neighbourhoods** (see Notes: 3.4 for details of POLAR 3 classification). Both cohorts showing a notably higher proportion than in the UK as a whole. (Table 3)
- 13.9 per cent of *young* part-time undergraduate entrants and 8.4 per cent of *mature* part-time undergraduate entrants at Welsh HEIs came from low participation neighbourhoods. The UK has corresponding figures of 12.8 per cent for *young* entrants and 7.7 per cent for *mature* entrants. (Table 4)
- 7.1 per cent of full-time first degree students (the highest rate in the UK) and 2.7 per cent of part-time undergraduate students in Welsh HEIs were in receipt of a **disabled students' allowance** (DSA). (Table 5)

Non-continuation Indicators, 2010/11 entrants

- 6.8 per cent of *young* full-time first degree entrants and 12.4 per cent of *mature* full-time first degree entrants to Welsh HEIs in 2010/11 did not continue beyond their first year. Both figures were higher than the comparable UK figures (6.3 per cent and 11.6 per cent respectively). (Table 6)
- 22 per cent of *young* full-time other undergraduate entrants to Welsh HEIs in 2010/11 did not continue beyond their first year. This proportion is markedly higher than the 16.2 per cent UK figure. 18.8 per cent of *mature* full-time other undergraduate entrants to Welsh HEIs in 2010/11 did not continue beyond their first year, compared with 11.8 per cent for the UK as a whole. (Table 7)
- 24.6 per cent of part-time first degree entrants to Welsh HEIs in 2009/10 who were aged 30 or under did not continue beyond their second year whilst 22.8 per cent of part-time first degree entrants to Welsh HEIs, aged over 30, did not continue beyond their second year. Both figures were markedly lower than the equivalent drop out rates for the same cohorts at UK HEIs (Table 8).
- 78.3 per cent of full-time students starting first degree courses in Welsh HEIs in 2010/11 were expected to gain a degree, while 12.7 per cent of such students were not expected to obtain an award or to transfer to another institution. This latter figure is an improvement on the figure for 2009/10 (14.8 per cent), but still above the 11.3 per cent figure for the UK as a whole. (Tables 9 and 10)

TABLES

Extended versions of these tables can be found on StatsWales by clicking on the icon



Table 1: Percentage of young entrants to full-time first degree courses from state schools or colleges

Country of institution	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
UK	87.4	87.8	88.0	88.5	88.8	88.7	88.9
Wales	91.8	93.1	93.4	93.2	93.2	92.2	91.9
England	86.9	87.2	87.4	88.0	88.4	88.2	88.5
Scotland	85.7	86.6	86.8	86.7	86.8	88.3	87.9
N. Ireland	99.8	99.6	99.7	99.5	99.2	98.9	98.9

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

Table 2: Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from NS-SEC Classes 4,5,6 or 7

Country of institution	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
UK	29.3	29.8	29.5	..	30.0	30.6	30.7
Wales	29.0	30.1	30.4	..	30.2	31.0	29.1
England	29.1	29.8	29.4	..	30.1	30.7	30.9
Scotland	27.3	25.9	26.3	..	25.8	27.2	26.6
N. Ireland	41.0	41.7	40.6	..	39.1	39.4	39.1

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

(a) In 2008/09 UCAS changed the question that informs NS-SEC. In 2009/10 UCAS reverted back to the original question.
2008/09 figures are not comparable with the rest of the timeseries and so have not been included.

Table 3: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3)

Country of institution	Young			Mature		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
UK	9.6	10.0	10.2	10.6	10.9	10.9
Wales	11.6	12.4	11.8	14.5	13.7	14.4
England	9.6	10.0	10.2	10.4	10.9	10.9
Scotland	..	..	..	..	..	..
N. Ireland	5.8	6.6	6.1	6.9	6.2	5.6

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

(a) '..' indicates the data item is not available - see Notes: 3.4, final paragraph for explanation.

Table 4: Percentage of part-time undergraduate entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3)

Country of institution	Young			Mature		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
UK	12.9	12.7	12.8	6.5	8.0	7.7
Wales	11.0	11.7	13.9	6.7	8.5	8.4
England	13.1	12.8	12.8	6.5	8.0	7.7
Scotland	..	..	..	..	..	..
N. Ireland	11.2	9.0	8.8	2.9	3.5	3.8

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

(a) '..' indicates the data item is not available - see Notes: 3.4, final paragraph for explanation.

Table 5: Percentage of students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance

Country of institution	Full-time, first degree				Part-time, undergraduate			
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
UK	4.7	4.9	5.3	5.9	2.6	2.9	3.0	3.4
Wales	5.8	5.7	6.1	7.1	1.8	1.9	2.7	2.7
England (excluding the OU)	4.8	4.9	5.4	6.0	2.7	3.0	3.5	3.9
Scotland	3.6	4.1	4.3	4.5	1.6	2.2	2.3	2.6
N. Ireland	3.7	3.5	4.1	4.1	2.4	2.8	2.1	3.4
Open University	.	.	.	.	..	2.9	2.7	3.0

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

(a) Unlike the other access indicators, this is table is based on all undergraduates, not just entrants.

(b) Open University figures for (2007/08 & 2008/09) were not consistent with other years due to changes in the HESA methodology for apportioning full-time equivalents (FTEs) between years.

(c) '.' indicates the item is not applicable, '..' indicates the item is not available.

Table 6: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants not continuing in HE after their first year

Country of institution	Young				Mature			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
UK	7.2	6.5	7.2	6.3	14.0	12.9	13.3	11.6
Wales	7.4	6.1	7.6	6.8	14.9	11.9	14.0	12.4
England	6.9	6.4	7.1	6.2	13.9	12.9	13.2	11.5
Scotland	8.3	7.6	7.6	7.6	15.0	14.8	14.6	13.0
N. Ireland	9.9	9.0	8.2	5.7	11.7	8.8	9.1	7.4

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

Table 7: Percentage of full-time other undergraduate entrants not continuing in HE after their first year

Country of institution	Young				Mature			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
UK	18.3	17.6	18.6	16.2	14.6	14.7	14.6	11.8
Wales	20.1	20.6	20.6	22	28.6	21.9	23.2	18.8
England	17.3	17.0	17.2	15.5	13.9	14.4	13.8	11.2
Scotland	24.4	22.3	35.5	20.6	16.7	14.9	24.4	18.5
N. Ireland	26.0	16.7	9.4	12.8	21.2	31.6	19.0	12.7

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

Table 8: Percentage of part-time, first degree entrants not continuing in HE two years after year of entry

Country of institution	2008/09 entry		2009/10 entry	
	aged 30 and under	aged over 30	aged 30 and under	aged over 30
UK	34.2	32.8	36.3	33.9
Wales	32.1	27.1	24.6	22.8
England	34.9	33.7	37.2	35.0
Scotland	28.0	28.0	27.8	28.0
N. Ireland	21.2	17.4	23.0	15.5

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

Table 9: Percentage of full-time students starting a first degree course expected to gain a degree

Country of institution	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
UK	77.6	77.4	77.3	77.9	78.8	78.4	80.5
Wales	77.1	77.2	75.3	77.5	78.2	76.6	78.3
England	78.1	78.0	77.9	78.2	79.2	78.7	81.1
Scotland	73.8	72.7	73.0	75.7	75.4	76.3	75.9
N. Ireland	77.9	77.7	78.6	77.1	80.9	81.3	84.5

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

Table 10: Percentage of full-time students starting a first degree course not expected to obtain an award or to transfer to another institution

Country of institution	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
UK	14.2	14.1	13.8	13.0	12.3	13.1	11.3
Wales	16.5	15.9	17.4	14.5	13.6	14.8	12.7
England	13.8	13.9	13.4	12.7	11.9	12.8	11.0
Scotland	15.4	14.3	14.4	13.8	13.9	14.2	13.7
N. Ireland	17.3	17.6	16.3	17.6	15.2	13.8	11.5

Source: HESA Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK

NOTES

1. Related Publications

The information in this Bulletin is taken from 'Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK' available on the HESA web-site at <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi> . A 'Guide to Performance Indicators in Higher Education' is also available at this web-site.

2. Data Source

The indicators are designed to provide information on the nature and performance of the higher education sector in the UK. They contribute to public accountability, and ensure that policy decisions are made on the basis of consistent and reliable information. The Performance Indicators are specified by the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) made up of funding bodies, government departments and representative bodies. They are calculated and published on behalf of PISG by HESA.

PISG has led the development of these indicators. Members are drawn from the four higher education funding bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (HEFCE, SHEFC, HEFCW, DEL); government departments including the Welsh Government, the Higher Education Statistics Agency, and the universities and colleges through their representative bodies (Universities UK and SCOP).

The HESA PI tables provide an indicator for each institution and a benchmark. The indicator shows how well the institution performed. The benchmark is an adjusted average based on the characteristics of each institution. Benchmarks are adjusted according to the subject mix offered, age profile of students and qualifications of students on entry. The benchmark can be used in two ways: To see how well an HEI is performing compared to the HE sector as a whole and to decide whether it is meaningful to compare two institutions – for example it probably isn't worth comparing a specialist art college with a large university offering a wide range of subjects. More details regarding the use of benchmarks can be found on the HESA website at

http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2059&Itemid=141

Please refer to the following HESA web page for information relating to changes that have been made to the Performance Indicators used in the Bulletin since 2001/02:

http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2055&Itemid=141

3 Definitions

3.1 Coverage

All the tables are based on students who are residents of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Most of the indicators are shown separately for young and mature students. In addition, most of them refer just to students on undergraduate courses. 2008/09 was the first year in which a non-continuation indicator was provided for part-time students.

3.2 Age

Many of the tables are split between young and mature students, defined as follows:

- **Young** students are those who are under 21 at 30 September of the academic year in which they are recorded as entering the institution - for students recorded as entering an institution in 2010/11, young students are those born after 30 September 1989.
- **Mature** students are those who are 21 or over, also at 30 September of the academic year in which they are recorded as entering the institution.

Table 8 is an exception and is split by those students at or under the age of thirty and those over the age of thirty.

3.3 National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)

The information on Socio-Economic Classification (SEC) is taken from the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). The classifications used are:

NS-SEC 1:	Higher managerial and professional occupations
NS-SEC 2:	Lower managerial and professional occupations
NS-SEC 3:	Intermediate occupations
NS-SEC 4:	Small employers and own account workers
NS-SEC 5:	Lower supervisory and technical occupations
NS-SEC 6:	Semi-routine occupations
NS-SEC 7:	Routine occupations

UCAS changed the question that informs NS-SEC for the majority of applicants for the 2008/09 academic year, but reverted to the original question for 2009/10 onwards. For applicants up to and including the 2007/08 academic year and from 2009/10, UCAS asked:

"If you are under 21, please give the occupation of your parent, step-parent or guardian who earns the most. If he or she is retired or unemployed, give their most recent occupation. If you are 21 or over, please give your own occupation."

For applicants for 2008/09 entry only, UCAS asked:

"If you are in full-time education, please state the occupation of the highest earning family member of the household in which you live. If he or she is retired or unemployed, give their most recent occupation. If you are not in full-time education, please state just your own occupation."

The change in question between 2007/08 and 2008/09 had an impact on the NS-SEC indicators, causing the proportion of students classified as 'unknown' and those classified as falling in to NS-SEC groups 4-7 to rise. NS-SEC data from 2008/09 was deemed by HESA to be not comparable with that published previously, and is therefore excluded from Table 2. While figures for 2009/10 are included in this table, there might be a slight impact on them caused by some applicants deferring their application to 2009/10 while using the 2008/09 form.

3.4 Low-participation neighbourhoods

From the 2011/12 publication onwards, the low participation data uses the POLAR3 classification, more information on the POLAR3 classification and the files used in the mapping can be found on the [HEFCE website](#). The POLAR3 data is not comparable with the previous POLAR2 method used in tables in the preceding years of this bulletin, therefore for time series purposes HESA have produced data for 2009/10 and 2010/11 entry using the POLAR3 methodology.

POLAR3 is based on the HE participation rates of people who were aged 18 between 2005 and 2009 and entered a HE course in a UK higher education institution or English or Scottish further education college, aged 18 or 19, between academic years 2005/06 and 2010/11.

It draws on data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Data Service, the Scottish Funding Council, UCAS and HM Revenue and Customs. The method used to get the participation rates is broadly similar to the method for POLAR2. There are some noteworthy differences between the two methods. The set of cohorts used to form the classification are more recent. Also information of entrants to HE courses at further education colleges in Wales are not included, though we estimate that this only has a small impact on the classification.

The POLAR3 classification is formed by ranking 2001 Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards by their young participation rates for the combined 2005 to 2009 cohorts. This gives five quintile groups of areas ordered from '1' (those wards with the lowest participation) to '5' (those wards with the highest participation), each representing 20 per cent of UK young cohort. Students have been allocated to the

neighbourhoods on the basis of their postcode. Those students whose postcode falls within wards with the lowest participation (quintile 1) are denoted as being from a low participation neighbourhood.

A earlier change in methodology had occurred in 2006/07 when the POLAR2 classification was introduced and once again this was not comparable with earlier years.

The low participation measure is based on a UK wide classification of areas into participation bands. The relatively high (in UK terms) participation rate in Scotland coupled with the very high proportion of HE that occurs in FE colleges means that the figures for Scottish institutions could, when viewed in isolation, misrepresent their contribution to widening participation. Low participation data has therefore not been produced for institutions in Scotland.

Further information can be found at: [HESA Low Participation Neighbourhoods](#)

3.5 Disabled students

The indicator used is the percentage of all undergraduate students who are recorded as being in receipt of disabled students' allowance (DSA). However, it should be noted that not all students who are disabled will apply for, or be eligible for, this allowance.

4 Key quality information

Data for the Open University have been suppressed for 2008/09 in Table 5 because changes introduced by HESA (and applied in 2007/08 & 2008/09) to the method of apportioning FTEs between years affected the reliability of this indicator for Open University students.

Following consultation with stakeholders, which revealed very low usage levels of the module completion data, it was agreed by the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) that from 2011/12 onwards the *module completion rate indicator* (already restricted to Welsh institutions) would no longer be produced as part of the Performance Indicators. Text referring to this indicator no longer appears in the bulletin.

4.1 Relevance

HESA is the official agency for the collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education. It was set up by agreement between the relevant government departments, the higher education funding councils and the universities and colleges. The primary purpose of the Student data collection is to provide each of the bodies listed above with accurate and comprehensive statistical information regarding student enrolments.

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor the performance of at Welsh HEIs. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Officials in the Welsh Government;
- Other government departments;
- The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales;
- Higher Education Institutions and representative bodies;
- Students, researchers, and academics;
- Individual citizens, private companies, and the media;

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- Advice to Ministers;
- To inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales;

Further information about the performance indicators and specific data issues can be found at the web address provided in the opening paragraph of this note.

4.2 Comparability

The Performance Indicators are in general consistent across all UK countries and data for higher education institutions in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland are presented in this Bulletin.

Further UK data, including at an institution level, contained in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) report “Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK 2011/12” can be found at <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi>.

STATS WALES

Tables associated with this bulletin containing a greater amount of detail are available on the Welsh Government’s interactive data dissemination service StatsWales (www.statswales.gov.uk). These tables provide a longer time series as well as an institution level breakdown of the statistics for Wales.