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Exploring Student Demand for  
Postgraduate Study

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# Contents

<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>2</b>
List of Tables.....	9
List of Figures.....	10
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Overall trends in the volume of applications .....	12
Trends in applications by detailed qualification type .....	13
Trends in applications by subject area.....	13
Trends in applications by domicile .....	14
Trends in applications by previous HE experience .....	15
Trends in applications by demographics.....	16
Age.....	16
Gender .....	16
Ethnicity.....	17
Disability status .....	17
Proportion of applications resulting in an offer .....	17
Postgraduate demand in the future.....	18
<b>Chapter 1: Background and Introduction</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Aims and objectives of the project .....	20
Key recent policy changes .....	20
Feasibility Study.....	24
Profile of HEIs providing application data .....	26
Approach to data weighting and analysis.....	28
Over-arching caveats on data presented.....	29

Report structure .....	30
<b>Chapter 2: Trends in applications by course type.....</b>	<b>31</b>
2.1 Overall application numbers.....	31
2.1.1. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes .....	34
2.1.2. Applications to Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	34
2.2. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up.....	34
2.2.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes.....	35
2.2.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	37
2.3. Application rates by detailed qualification type.....	38
2.3.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes.....	38
2.3.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	40
2.4. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up by detailed qualification type.....	42
2.4.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes.....	42
2.4.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	43
2.5. Mode of study .....	44
2.5.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes.....	44
2.5.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	48
2.5.3. Qualitative feedback from HEIs about mode of study .....	50
<b>Chapter 3: Trends in applications by subject area.....</b>	<b>53</b>
3.1. Caveats on the data .....	53
3.2. Application rates by detailed subject breakdown.....	53
3.2.1. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes by subject .....	53
3.2.2. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGT) Programmes by subject.....	56
3.3. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up by detailed qualification type.....	60
3.3.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes.....	60

3.3.2.	Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	62
3.4.	Qualitative feedback from HEIs discussions on the changing nature of demand by subject area	64
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>Trends in applications by domicile .....</b>	<b>66</b>
4.1.	Caveats on the data .....	66
4.2.	Application rates by Domicile .....	66
4.2.1.	Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes by Domicile .....	66
4.2.2.	Applications to Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes by Domicile.....	68
4.3.	Ratio of application numbers to places taken up by domicile .....	71
4.3.1.	Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes .....	71
4.3.2.	Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes .....	72
4.3.3.	Trends in PGR Applications by Domicile by Course Type .....	74
4.3.4.	Trends in PGT Applications by Domicile by Course Type.....	75
4.3.5.	Trends in PGR Applications by Domicile By Subject .....	77
4.3.6.	Trends in PGT Applications by Domicile By Subject.....	81
4.4.	Qualitative findings from HEIs discussions regarding use of overseas agents .....	85
4.4.1.	What do agents do? .....	85
4.4.2.	How are agents paid? .....	86
4.4.3.	Impact of agents on applications.....	86
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	<b>Trends in applications by Previous HE experience .....</b>	<b>87</b>
5.1.	Caveats and limitations of the data .....	87
5.2.	Proportions of applications submitted by alumni .....	87
5.2.1.	Proportion of applications submitted to PGR by alumni .....	87
5.2.2.	Proportion of applications submitted to PGT by alumni.....	88
5.3.	Proportions of applications submitted by alumni by mission group .....	89
5.3.1.	Proportion of applications submitted by alumni to PGR courses by mission group ..	89

5.3.2.	Proportion of applications submitted by alumni to PGT courses by mission group...	89
5.4.	Ratios of applications to enrolments by alumni status (PGR).....	90
5.4.1.	Ratios of PGR applications to enrolments by alumni status.....	90
5.4.2.	Ratio of PGT applications to enrolments by alumni status .....	90
5.5.	Trends in proportion of applications submitted by alumni by domicile.....	91
5.5.1.	Trends in proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by domicile.....	91
5.5.2.	Trends in proportion of PGT applications submitted by alumni by domicile .....	92
5.6.	Trends in proportion of applications submitted by alumni by detailed qualification type ..	93
5.6.1.	Trends in proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by detailed qualification type .....	93
5.6.2.	Trends in proportion of PGT applications submitted by alumni by detailed course breakdown.....	93
5.7.	Trends in proportion of applications submitted by alumni by detailed subject breakdown	94
5.7.1.	Trends in proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by detailed subject breakdown.....	94
5.7.2.	Trends in proportion of PGT applications submitted by alumni by detailed subject breakdown.....	96
<b>Chapter 6:</b>	<b>Trends in applications by Demographics.....</b>	<b>98</b>
6.1.	Caveats and limitations of the data .....	98
6.2.	Profile of Applications to Postgraduate Study by Age at Point of Application .....	99
6.2.1.	Applications to PGR Programmes by Age .....	99
6.2.2.	Applications to PGT Programmes by Age .....	100
6.2.3.	Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Age .....	101
6.2.4.	Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Age .....	102
6.2.5.	Trends in PGR Applications by Age by Course Type.....	103
6.2.6.	Trends in PGT Applications by Age by Course Type .....	105
6.2.7.	Trends in PGR Applications by Age By Subject.....	107

6.2.8.	Trends in PGT Applications by Age by Subject.....	110
6.3.	Profile of Applications to Postgraduate Study by Gender.....	115
6.3.1.	Applications to PGR Programmes by Gender.....	115
6.3.2.	Applications to PGT Programmes by Gender .....	116
6.3.3.	Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Gender.....	117
6.3.4.	Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Gender .....	118
6.3.5.	Trends in PGR Applications by Gender by Course Type .....	119
6.3.6.	Trends in PGT Applications by Gender by Course Type.....	120
6.3.7.	Trends in PGR Applications by Gender By Subject .....	121
6.3.8.	Trends in PGT Applications by Gender By Subject.....	124
6.4.	Profile of UK-domiciled Applications to Postgraduate Study by Ethnicity.....	128
6.4.1.	UK- domiciled Applications to PGR Programmes by Ethnicity .....	128
6.4.2.	UK-domiciled Applications to PGT Programmes by Ethnicity .....	130
6.4.3.	Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Ethnicity .....	131
6.4.4.	Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Ethnicity.....	133
6.5.	Profile of Applications to Postgraduate Study by Disability Status .....	134
6.5.1.	Applications to PGR Programmes by Disability Status .....	134
6.5.2.	Applications to PGT Programmes by Disability Status.....	135
6.5.3.	Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Disability Status .....	136
6.5.4.	Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Disability Status.....	137
<b>Chapter 7:</b>	<b>Proportion of applications resulting in an offer .....</b>	<b>138</b>
7.1.	Caveats and limitations of the data .....	138
7.2.	Proportion of applications that result in an offer .....	138
7.2.1.	Proportion of PGR applications that result in an offer .....	138
7.2.2.	Proportion of PGT applications that result in an offer.....	140

7.3.	Application to offer ratio by detailed qualification type.....	141
7.3.1.	Application to offer ratio by detailed qualification type (PGR) .....	141
7.3.2.	Application to offer ratio by detailed qualification type (PGT).....	142
7.4.	Application to offer ratio by Subject .....	143
7.4.1.	Application to offer ratio by Subject (PGR).....	143
7.4.2.	Application to offer ratio by Subject (PGT) .....	145
7.5.	Application to offer ratio by Domicile .....	146
7.5.1.	Application to offer ratio by Domicile (PGR).....	146
7.5.2.	Application to offer ratio by Domicile (PGT) .....	147
<b>Chapter 8:</b>	<b>Postgraduate Demand in the Future .....</b>	<b>149</b>
8.1.	Postgraduate demand in the future .....	149
	Widening participation.....	150
	Demographics .....	150
	Subject choice.....	150
	Qualification type.....	151
	Part-time / Full Time.....	152
	Candidate quality .....	152
	International students.....	153
	HEI response .....	153
	Repeating the data collation exercise .....	155
	Recommendations on analysing postgraduate demand in the future .....	157
<b>Appendix I:</b>	<b>Volumetric tables .....</b>	<b>159</b>
	Chapter 2 .....	159
	Chapter 3 .....	161
	Chapter 4 .....	163

Chapter 5 .....	170
Chapter 6 .....	171
<b>Appendix II: Postgraduate typology .....</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Appendix III Table of student numbers.....</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Appendix IV Research instruments .....</b>	<b>187</b>
Data specification sent to participating HEIs.....	187
Qualitative discussion guide used at HEI site visits .....	204



## List of Tables

Table 1:1 Number of HEIs providing data for each time period, by mission group and quartile .....	27
Table 2.1: Total number of applications submitted to English HEIs for postgraduate study .....	33
Table 2.2: Ratio of applications to places taken up by qualification type (PGR) .....	42
Table 2.3: Ratio of applications to places taken up by qualification type (PGT).....	43
Table 2.4: Mode of study according to specific qualification type (PGR) .....	46
Table 2.5: Mode of study according to specific qualification type (PGT).....	49
Table 2.6: Mode of study according to Domicile (PGR) .....	51
Table 2.7: Mode of study according to Domicile (PGT) .....	52
Table 3.1: PGR Applications by Subject Area.....	54
Table 3.2: PGT Applications by Subject Area .....	57
Table 3.3: Ratio of applications to places taken up by subject area (PGR) .....	60
Table 3.4: Ratio of applications to places taken up by subject area (PGT).....	62
Table 4.1: Proportion of PGR Applications by Domicile.....	68
Table 4.2: Proportion of PGT Applications by Domicile .....	70
Table 4.3: Proportion of PGR Applications by Domicile by Course Type.....	74
Table 4.4: Proportion of PGT Applications by Domicile by Course Type .....	75
Table 4.5: Proportion of PGR Applications split by Subject Area within Domicile .....	77
Table 4.6: Proportion of PGT Applications split by Subject Area within Domicile .....	81
Table 5.1: Percentage of applications received from alumni by year (PGR).....	87
Table 5.2: Percentage of applications received from alumni by year (PGT) .....	88
Table 5.3: Percentage of PGR applications submitted alumni by mission group .....	89
Table 5.4: Percentage of PGT applications submitted alumni by mission group .....	90
Table 5.5: Ratio of applications to places taken up by alumni status (PGR).....	90
Table 5.6: Ratio of applications to places taken up by existing student status (PGT).....	91
Table 5.7: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by domicile (PGR) .....	92
Table 5.8: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by domicile (PGT) .....	92
Table 5.9: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by course type (PGR).....	93
Table 5.10: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by course type (PGT) .....	94
Table 5.11: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by subject area (PGR).....	95
Table 5.12: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by subject area (PGT) .....	97
Table 6.1: Proportion of PGR Applications by Age by Course Type .....	104
Table 6.2: Proportion of PGT Applications by Age by Course Type .....	106
Table 6.3: Proportion of PGR Applications by Age by Subject Area .....	107
Table 6.4: Proportion of PGT Applications by Age by Subject Area .....	111
Table 6.5: Proportion of PGR Applications by Gender by Qualification Type .....	119
Table 6.6: Proportion of PGT Applications by Qualification Type by Gender.....	120
Table 6.7: Proportion of PGR Applications by Subject Area by Gender .....	121
Table 6.8: Proportion of PGT Applications by Subject Area by Gender.....	125
Table 7.1: Ratio of applications to offers by qualification type (PGR) .....	141
Table 7.2: Ratio of applications to offers by qualification type (PGT).....	142
Table 7.3: Ratio of applications to offers received by Subject Area (PGR).....	143
Table 7.4: Ratio of applications to offers by Subject Area (PGT).....	145

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Ratio of applications to places taken up (PGR) .....	36
Figure 2.2: Ratio of applications to places taken up (PGT).....	37
Figure 2.3: Applications by qualification type (PGR).....	39
Figure 2.4: Applications by qualification type (PGT) .....	40
Figure 2.5: Applications by mode of study (PGR).....	45
Figure 2.6: Applications by mode of study (PGT) .....	48
Figure 4.1: PGR Applications by Domicile (absolute numbers) .....	67
Figure 4.2: PGT Applications by Domicile (absolute numbers).....	68
Figure 4.3: Percentage of Applications to PGR Programmes Leading to Enrolment According to Domicile .....	71
Figure 4.4: Percentage of Applications to PGT Programmes Leading to Enrolment According to Domicile .....	72
Figure 6.1: Proportion of Applications to PGR programmes by Age .....	99
Figure 6.2: Proportion of applications to PGT programmes by age .....	100
Figure 6.3: Percentage of PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment .....	102
Figure 6.4: Percentage of PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment.....	103
Figure 6.5: Proportion of Applications to PGR by Gender.....	115
Figure 6.6: Proportion of Applications to PGT by Gender .....	116
Figure 6.7: Percentage of PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment by Gender.....	117
Figure 6.8: Percentage of PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment by Gender .....	118
Figure 6.9: Proportion of UK-domiciled Applications to PGR by Ethnicity.....	128
Figure 6.10: Proportion of UK-domiciled Applications to PGT by Ethnicity .....	130
Figure 6.11: Percentage of UK-domiciled PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment split by ethnicity.....	132
Figure 6.12: Percentage of UK-domiciled PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment split by ethnicity.....	133
Figure 6.13: Proportion of Applications to PGR by Disability Status .....	134
Figure 6.14: Proportion of Applications to PGT by Disability Status .....	135
Figure 6.15: Percentage of PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment split by disability status .....	136
Figure 6.16: Percentage of PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment split by disability status .....	137
Figure 7.1: Ratio of applications to offers made (PGR) .....	139
Figure 7.2: Ratio of applications to offers made (PGT).....	140
Figure 7.3: Percentage of applications resulting in an offer by Domicile (PGR).....	147
Figure 7.4: Percentage of applications resulting in an offer by Domicile (PGT).....	148

# Executive Summary

While applications for undergraduate study are managed centrally by UCAS, there is no equivalent for postgraduate study and individual Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) largely manage their own application processes. This means that there is no straightforward way to look at how applications to postgraduate study have changed over time.

In this context, BIS commissioned this research project which looked to collate information on postgraduate applications from individual HEIs and to analyse it with a view to:

- Looking to establish the trends in postgraduate applications over recent years and how these might be linked to Higher Education policy changes;
- Setting a benchmark against which the impact of future changes in Higher Education policy on postgraduate might be measured.

Prior to the collation of postgraduate application data from HEIs, a feasibility study was conducted to determine the extent of data available and its analysis potential. This stage of the project comprised a quantitative online survey followed by site visits to selected HEIs.

On the basis of findings from the feasibility study about the nature of data held and willingness to share information, requests for the exchange of data were sent to a total of 24 HEIs. A total of 20 HEIs submitted their application data. Only English HEIs were asked to submit data.

Based on findings from the feasibility study about the type of information held consistently across HEIs, organisations were asked to provide information on applications relating to:

- **Demographics** (Gender, Date of birth, ethnicity and disability status);
- **Course type** (Qualification type, Subject area and Mode of study);
- **Domicile**; (UK domiciled, other EU, Non EU – which can be understood as a proxy for Funding Status)
- **Previous HEI** (previous HEI attended and date of previous qualification);
- **Outcomes** (whether offers made and whether offers were taken up)

Of those providing data, six provided data for applications made from 2005/06 onwards, a further six provided data from 2008/09 onwards, and a further eight provided data from 2010/11 onwards. The data for each application year have been weighted to represent the full population of HEIs with postgraduate students. This allows us to produce estimates of the total number of applications in each year and also to make assessments about the trends in applications over the 7 year period covered using data for each year from all those institutions who were able to provide it. Some caution should be adopted when

interpreting volumes of applications; these should be understood as indicative, rather than reflecting the absolute numbers of applications. Therefore the bulk of the commentary in the report focuses its analysis on proportions, ratios and percentages (which are likely to be representative of general trends). Inevitably the data for the most recent two application years i.e. 2010/11 and 2011/12 is more robust (17 HEIs provided PGR data and 20 PGT data) than for earlier years.

In interpreting the data collected as part of this study, it is important to note that the data collected represents **applications** and not individual **applicants**. HEIs reported that many individuals make multiple applications to postgraduate study and they felt that this practice has become increasingly common since the advent of online application forms. However, given that the data for this study was obtained from a sub-set of institutions it would not be possible to conduct the cross-referencing necessary to establish applicant-based data. Furthermore it would have meant sharing of data that identified individual students and most participating HEIs felt that the anonymity of individual applications was a prerequisite for them sharing data at all.

It is also worth noting that, while data was collected for most types of postgraduate qualification, applications for PGCE courses and for Integrated Masters courses were excluded from the research. The reason for excluding PGCE courses is that the use of a pan-HEI application process handled by GTTR for these programmes meant that HEIs often retained less information about PGCE applicants than they did for applicants to other courses. Similarly, most HEIs did not retain information on applications to Integrated Masters courses as part of their postgraduate databases (these were generally considered to be part of the undergraduate admissions process).

## Overall trends in the volume of applications

### PGR

The data indicates that the volume of applications to postgraduate research (PGR) programmes increased by 73% over the seven year period so that during the 2011/12 academic year over 195,000 applications were received by English HEIs (compared with 114,000 in the academic year 2005/06).

After year-on-year increases in the volume of applications, it appears that there was a fall in applications to PGR study in 2010/11. The volume of applications recovered slightly in 2011/12 although still remains behind the peak in 2009/10 (when over 220,482 applications were received).

### PGT

The number of applications to postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes increased more dramatically over the 7 year period covered by the research than those submitted for PGR. The data indicates that the volume of applications increased by 164% over this time. During the 2011/12 academic year more than 1.3 million applications were made to PGT study.

The data indicates that the volume of PGT applications increased consistently year on year throughout the 7-year period covered. The most marked increase in applications to PGT programmes occurred in the 2008/09 academic year; applications in this year were up by 51% on the number submitted in 2007/08. However, since the 2009/10 academic

year the number of applications to PGT programmes has only increased by a comparatively modest amount each year.

## Trends in applications by detailed qualification type

### PGR

PGR applications were most commonly made for PhDs (which have been categorised to incorporate MPhil qualifications alongside traditional PhDs). Overall, they represented 86% of all applications submitted across the seven year period. Over the seven year period, the number of applications to both Professional Doctorates and Higher Doctorates accounted for only a very small proportion of PGR applications. Submissions to Research Masters comprised 12% of applications submitted across the period and applications to Professional Doctorate qualifications represented just 2%.

The numbers of applications submitted to PhDs increased by 88% over the period and even more markedly, applications to Professional Doctorates increased by 343% over the seven years (albeit volumes were considerably smaller). Conversely applications to Research Masters declined by 8%.

However, the data suggests that, in 2010/11 the volume of applications for all PGR qualification types dropped considerably; with a decrease of 28% in the number of applications to Research Masters, 19% to Professional Doctorates and 17% to PhDs.

### PGT

Of all PGT applications within the scope of the project (i.e. Masters Degrees, MBAs and Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates), the vast majority of applications in each year were submitted to Masters Courses. On average across the period, they accounted for 92% of all PGT applications. In comparison, just 5% of applications were made to Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas and 3% were made to MBAs.

Overall, applications to all PGT qualifications increased over the course of the seven years period; by 169% for Masters Degrees, 150% for Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates and 72% for MBA programmes.

The dramatic decline in applications to all PGR qualifications in 2010/11 was not reflected at PGT level. Rather, there was a year on year increase in applications Masters Courses and Diplomas and Certificates; although there was a greater degree fluctuation in the number of applications submitted to MBAs.

## Trends in applications by subject area

### PGR

In 2005/06, applications to study in the field of Social / Political / Economic studies accounted for almost half of all PGR applications, at 48%. However, this proportion then declined year on year, almost halving by 2011/12, when it stood at 23%. As well as this large reduction in the proportion of applications for Social / Political / Economic studies, the data indicates that there has been a steady reduction in the overall volume of these applications from around 55,000 in 2005/06 to 45,000 in 2011/12. However, despite this, in the most recent academic year, submissions to Social / Political / Economic studies still represented the largest proportion of applications.

Over the course of the seven year period, some notable increases in the number of applications can be identified in certain subject areas. Subjects aligned to Medicine increased markedly over the period having represented <1% of applications in 2005/06 but 6% in 2011/12. In a similar vein, applications to Medicine and Dentistry also increased, albeit to a slightly lesser degree, constituting 1% of applications in 2005/6 but 4% in 2011/12. In addition, PGR applications to Biological sciences increased notably from 4% in 2005/06 to 9% in 2011/12.

## **PGT**

In contrast the PGR level, the most popular PGT subject area was Business / Administrative studies. Across the seven years a third of all applications (33%) were for intended study on such courses and a gradual year on year increase was also evident across the period.

A fifth of PGT applications (18%) were submitted to Social / Political / Economic studies, the second most popular subject area. Reflecting trends evident at PGR level, applications to this area decreased dramatically over the period. In 2005/6 applications to Social / Political and Economic studies represented a quarter of all submissions (25%), but by 2011/12 they represented just 16%.

However, there is no evidence of the pronounced increase within some of the Medical / Biological subject areas apparent as PGR level. Although growth is evident, in 2005/6 applications to Medicine and Dentistry represented <1% of applications but seven years later they only constituted 2% of submissions. Similarly, across the period, the proportion of applications made to Subject allied to Medicine grew from 3% to 4%. In direct contrast to trends evident at PGR level, applications to Biological Sciences actually decreased from 3% to 2% between 2005/6 and 2011/12.

## **Trends in applications by domicile**

### **PGR**

At an overall level, the only point when there was a decline in numbers of applications was in 2010/11 when the number of PGR applications across all groups dropped, before recovering again in 2011/12. Looking at applications from UK domiciled individuals in particular, there was a 5% decrease in 2010/11 followed by an 8% increase in 2011/12.

Across the course of the seven years, 63% of all applications were submitted by non-EU candidates, a fifth (20%) were submitted by UK domiciled applicants and 17% from persons domiciled in the rest of the EU.

Contrasted against a steady increase in the proportion of applications received from UK domiciled candidates (increasing from 16% in 2005/6 to 24% in 2011/12), there has been a modest decline in the proportion of PGR submissions from both International and non-EU candidates across the seven years. The proportion of application submitted by other EU candidates decreased from 21% to 15% and the proportion of applications from International applicants has also declined slightly from 64% in 2005/06 to 61% per cent in 2011/12.

However, as discussed above, the overall volume of applications to PGR study has grown over the period and, in terms of absolute numbers, the volume of applications from all 3

domicile groups has increased – it is just that the rate of growth of applications from UK domiciled candidates has been more rapid than for students from abroad.

## **PGT**

In terms of absolute volumes of applications, the numbers of UK domiciled and other EU applications each rose year on year until 2009/10; however, for both groups, numbers of applications then fell in 2010/11 and again in 2011/12. The number of applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates decreased by 15% over the two years. This is compared to a year on year increase in the number of applications submitted by non-EU candidates throughout the period.

PGT submissions from non-EU candidates comprised an even higher proportion of total applications than for PGR programmes. On average across the period, non-EU applications represented over seven in ten submissions (72%). Moreover, the proportion of PGT applications submitted by non-EU candidates has increased rapidly over the period from 68% in 2005/6 to 77% in the most recent academic year. This provides indication that the international market is even more significant from PGT programmes than it is for PGR.

In 2011/12 just 14% of applications were submitted by UK domiciled candidates; as a point of comparison, 24% of applications were submitted by UK domiciled candidates in the same year at PGR level. The proportion of PGT applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates has declined over the period; in 2005/6 they represented 18% of PGT applications.

Approximately one in ten applications (9%) received in 2011/12 were submitted by other EU candidates. The proportion of applications received by other EU candidates also declined over the period, but to a lesser degree than Home applications; 13% of submissions were made by other EU applicants in 2005/6.

## **Trends in applications by previous HE experience**

HEIs were asked to indicate whether applications were made by individuals studying at their own institution. Only sufficient information was collated to be able to provide robust analysis from 2008/9 onwards for both PGR and PGT applications; as such 2005/6, 2006/7 and 2007/8 academic years have been excluded.

### **PGR**

On average across the four year period approximately 15% of PGR applications were submitted by candidates intending to study at their current / previous HE provider. This proportion remained fairly consistent across the four years with alumni representing between roughly 14% and 16% of total submissions.

### **PGT**

In comparison to PGR, a lower proportion of PGT applications were submitted by alumni. Since 2008/9 approximately 5% of PGT applications were made by persons wishing to study at their current or previous institution.

During qualitative site visit discussions, a number of HEIs mentioned that they had been making increasing efforts to market postgraduate study to their own undergraduates. Some institutions had implemented (or were considering introducing) fee discounts for existing students wishing to progress straight from undergraduate study. It was understood that this might help to persuade, a higher proportion of existing undergraduates (who may have alternatively considered postgraduate study elsewhere) to remain at their current HE provider.

## Trends in applications by demographics

HEIs were asked to provide demographic data pertaining to applicants' age, gender, ethnicity and disability status.

At the feasibility study for this project, the potential to collect other demographic data was explored and in particular data that might give an indication of applicants socio-economic status. However, very few HEIs held data that could be used for this purpose and, in any case, there was some uncertainty as to what measures would be appropriate (using data relating to parental background or schooling was felt to be far less relevant to postgraduate applicants than to undergraduates for example).

### Age

#### PGR

On average across the seven year period, 24% of PGR applications were submitted by candidates aged 23 and younger (who are likely to have progressed straight from undergraduate study). Half of applications were made by those aged between 24 and 30 (49 per cent) indicating that a large number of applicants do not apply to postgraduate study directly after completion of a first degree. Approximately 27% of applications were submitted by those aged over 30. The age profile of applications to PGR study has not changed markedly over the 7 year period covered by the research.

#### PGT

As might be expected, compared to PGR applications, a much higher proportion of applications to PGT programmes were submitted by candidates aged 23 and under (approximately 49% on average across the period).

The proportion of PGT applications from those aged 23 and has increased steadily over the 7 year period. In the most recent academic year (2011/12), applications from this age group represented 55%, in 2005/6 they comprised only 40% of applications. As such a large proportion of the growth in volumes of applications for PGT can be attributed to this increased interest amongst younger persons.

### Gender

#### PGR

Throughout the 7-year period, applications for PGR programmes were more likely to be submitted by men than by women; approximately six in ten (61%) applications were submitted by men.

However, the proportion of applications submitted by women has increased slightly over the seven years, rising from 37% of applications in 2005/06 to 40% of applications in 2011/12.



**PGT**

At the beginning of the period, more than half of all PGT applications were submitted by men (representing 54% of applications in 2005/06). Yet, over time, the proportion of applications from women has steadily increased so that in 2009/10 there was a relatively even gender split in PGT applications and by 2011/12 applications from women accounted for 54 per cent of applications.

This has entailed that over the period covered, in contrast to PGR, an equal proportion of men and women submitted applications to PGT programmes (50% respectively).

**Ethnicity****PGR**

Over the period covered by this research, there have not been any major changes to the ethnic profile of PGR applications made by UK-domiciled applicants. Overall, 72% of applicants were White; 7% Asian; 6% Black; 3% Mixed; 2% Chinese and 2% Other ethnic group. In 2011/12, 70% of applications were submitted by White applicants, 7% Asian and 8% Black illustrating the level of consistency across the period.

**PGT**

In contrast with PGR study, there has been some change in the ethnic profile of UK Domiciled PGT applicants over the period. The proportion of applications made by white candidates has fallen fairly steadily across the seven years, from nearly three-quarters (73%) of applications in 2005/06 to just over three-fifths (63%) in 2011/12. Conversely, the proportion of applications submitted by Black candidates has increased over the period (from 6% in 2005/06 to 11% in 2011/12). Changes in the proportions of applications accounted for by other ethnic groups are relatively slight or they have remained consistent.

**Disability status**

On average across the seven year period, 3% of PGR applicants and 2% of PGR applicants declared a disability. For both PGR and PGT, this remained at a similar level each year, representing between 3-4% of PGR applications and 2-3% of PGT applications.

**Proportion of applications resulting in an offer****PGR**

The ratio of PGR applications received to offers made has remained broadly consistent over the course of the past seven application years. Since 2005/06, the ratio of applications to offers has varied between 2.71 and, at its most competitive, 3.40 applications to every place offered. Hence, as a general rule, where the volume of applications increased so has the volume of offers made. However, there is an indication that over time the proportion of offers leading to enrolment has decreased slightly. Comparing applications to places taken up shows an increase in the ratio from 5.83 in 2005/06 to 6.36 in 2011/12.

**PGT**

The ratio of PGT applications received to offers made has also remained consistent over time. There is again a correlation between the proportion of applications and the number of offers made; as the number of applications increased each year, the number of offers

made also increased accordingly. Since 2005/06, the ratio of applications to offers varies between 1.71 and 1.89 applications to every place offered. There has been less consistency in the ratio of applications to places taken up for PGT study than for PGR study (with ratios varying from 4.29:1 in 2005/06 to 5.34:1 in 2010/11).

## Postgraduate demand in the future

While demand for postgraduate study has increased in recent years, the HEIs who shared their application data for this project all expressed concern about the future of postgraduate study in the UK. Although many felt that the impact of 2006 increases in undergraduate fees on the demand for postgraduate study had been quite slight (at least at an overall level), there was a general consensus that the effect of £9,000 fees introduced in Autumn 2012 will be much more heavily felt.

HEIs generally expected to see a reduction in the demand for postgraduate study among UK-domiciled students progressing straight from undergraduate study from the application year 2015/16 onwards. They felt that the impact of increased undergraduate fees could be particularly acute in the context of other environmental factors affecting demand for postgraduate study and in particular:

- The reduction in financial support offered by the Research Councils<sup>1</sup>;
- A lack of a standardised loan system for (primarily) taught postgraduate study (akin to that available for undergraduate study);
- The withdrawal of the post study work visa which previously allowed international students to stay in the UK for up to two years after completion of their studies to find employment<sup>2</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> There is suggestion by representatives at Research Councils that this fear may prove to be unfounded. However, there is evidence to suggest that changes have been considered which could have prompted these concerns, for example the Research Councils UK Strategic Vision suggests that emphasis should be placed on supporting quality PhD provision, in preference of support for taught Masters Courses. Moreover their delivery plans outlined changes to the overall level of funding offered to PhD training.

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/policy/Pages/StratVision.aspx> (section 4.2)

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/about/aboutRCUK/Pages/DeliveryPlan.aspx>

Other news articles have appeared in the national media potentially further fuelling the notion that less support will be available to prospective postgraduate applicants.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14309883>

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/feb/26/how-to-find-postgraduate-funding>

<http://www.capitaeducation.co.uk/news/hundreds-of-phds-and-masters-courses-cut-news-800637603>

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130116103406881>

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/jan/05/university-protest-disastrous-neglect-postgraduates>

- Uncertainty in international currency exchange rates.

There was, however, a lack of consensus about how the profile of applications might change in the future. Most HEIs anticipated that the proportion of applications submitted to areas such as Arts and Humanities would decline in favour of applications for more “vocational” STEM subjects. In addition, most felt that there was a threat to efforts that have been made over recent years to widen participation in postgraduate study to those from more disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Beyond this there was a mix of views in how the demographic profile of applications might change, the impact on demand for different qualification types and the impact on demand for alternatives to full-time study. There were also mixed views on the potential impact on the quality of postgraduate applications.

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<sup>2</sup> This has been replaced by a new system enabling PhD students to apply to stay in the UK for an additional 12 months after completion of their course

# Chapter 1: Background and Introduction

## Aims and objectives of the project

It has been acknowledged that over the course of the past decade, reviews and reports exploring the student population in the UK have tended to focus predominantly on those studying for undergraduate degrees. This is despite statistical evidence indicating that the postgraduate sector is growing quicker than the undergraduate sector. Professor Adrian Smith summarised in his 2010 submission to the Secretary of State that “compared to the undergraduate sector, postgraduate provision has had relatively little attention paid to it...despite the fact that postgraduate education is of enormous value to the UK”.

Reflecting the suggestions made by Professor Smith and others, attention has begun to shift towards the postgraduate sector and particularly the impact that the introduction of the new tuition fee system for undergraduates might have on the demand for postgraduate study. However, while there is good data available on the volumes and profile of those taking up postgraduate study through the returns compiled by HESA, there has been little available on the pattern of applications. In part this is because there is currently no centralised applications database used by all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering provision at postgraduate level<sup>3</sup>. Most students apply directly to their institution of choice and in the main; universities manage their own internal admissions systems.

In this context, BIS commissioned this research project which looked to collate information on postgraduate applications from individual HEIs and to analyse it with a view to:

- Looking to establish the trends in postgraduate applications over recent years;
- Setting a benchmark against which the impact of future changes in Higher Education policy on postgraduate might be measured.

## Key recent policy changes

The data that has been analysed for this study covers the period from the academic year 2005-06 through to the academic year 2011-12. During that time, a number of significant HE policy changes took place that form the backdrop to the trends in applications described in this report.

The principal changes concerned the level of fees charged for undergraduate study. A Labour white paper in 2003 proposed increasing fees to £3,000, and students starting their undergraduate study in autumn 2006 then became the first to pay these higher level fees. The 2008/09 academic year would have been the first year in which students paying these increased level fees submitted applications to postgraduate study (in the final year of their

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<sup>3</sup> Although around 20 HEIs use UKPASS, a search engine for postgraduate courses.

undergraduate studies, for all those on a three-year course). Therefore, a negative impact on postgraduate applications in 2008/09 might be expected.

In October 2010, the Browne review was published, recommending that £3,375 annual cap on tuition fees be removed. It further suggested that there should be no cap on the fees that institutions could charge. The implications of the proposed system were that:

- The government would provide upfront loans to cover tuition fees and living costs of students. Means tested grants would be available for students from lower income families.
- Students would repay loans after graduation and only when earning more than £21,000 annually. Repayments would be made at a rate of 9% on any income over £21,000 and any debt not repaid after 30 years would be written off.
- Part-time students would no longer have to pay upfront tuition fees, but would be eligible for loans.

In response to the recommendations outlined by Browne, in December 2010, the coalition government voted to amend the structure of HEI funding which incorporated many of Browne's recommendations (although not the abolition of caps on tuition fees altogether). It was resolved that:

- The universities teaching grant was reduced by 80 per cent and as of September 2012 universities in England were able to charge up to £9000 a year in tuition fees.<sup>4</sup>
- Those HEIs that opted to charge fees of over £6000 are required to contribute to a National Scholarships program and more rigorous sanctions are to be introduced to encourage these universities to widen access.
- The government will offer upfront loans; this will start to be repaid once graduates earn £21,000 annual income (rising from the former £15,000 threshold) at a rate of 9%. Any outstanding debt will be written off after 30 years.
- Part-time students will be entitled to loans on a similar basis to full-time student.

The new regime was effective as of the Autumn term 2012. The coalition government have stressed that the changes will not only serve as a means to reduce the deficit, but that it will also work to enforce the principle that funding should follow the student, thereby incentivising universities to improve their teaching.<sup>5</sup>

There has been considerable discussion as to the impact of the revised fee structure upon the future student population (both at undergraduate and postgraduate level) but very little

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11483638>

<sup>5</sup> *The government's proposals for higher education funding and student finance – an analysis*. John Thompson and Bahram Bekhradnia

robust research has been conducted to assess whether or not cost and access to finance deter potential students from embarking on postgraduate study<sup>6</sup>.

A 2010 HEPI report summarised that although HESA statistics had suggested that the introduction of the £3,000 undergraduate fees in 2006 had not duly affected postgraduate numbers, it was also reported that 58% of undergraduate students (2009) had been deterred from taking a postgraduate course because of the cost<sup>7</sup>.

It may be even more difficult to predict the impact of the increased £9,000 undergraduate fees on the postgraduate landscape. Although the Browne Review concluded that “if fees can be deferred, then participation can be protected”, in contrast, the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) concludes that “a £1,000 increase in loans or grants is not sufficient to counteract the impact of a £1,000 increase in fees”<sup>8</sup>.

Thompson and Bekhradnia suggest that there “must be some prospect that some students will balk at paying a fee of up to £9,000 for a course that is likely to lead to rather uncertain financial benefits” but also highlight that the loan repayment terms are relatively generous (student will pay less each month, though they will pay for longer). Moreover for many, in the long term, attending university will still be a better option in financial terms than not attending and the government offers assurances that students from lower income households will receive more support and that the new system will enable greater social mobility.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, there is little consensus as to if and how the regime, introduced in September 2012, will ultimately affect postgraduate student numbers and demographics. In the context of this significant change to the undergraduate fee system, stakeholders agree that it is very difficult to predict how the postgraduate landscape will be affected as a result.

Significant changes to student visa rules also took place during the period covered by this research, which also have a potential impact on international demand for postgraduate study.

Since February 2009, all education providers wanting to bring non-EEA students into the UK have had to apply to become licensed sponsors, and to comply with their sponsorship duties under the Tier 4 category of the points-based system.<sup>10</sup> From this point onwards it

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<sup>6</sup> *One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education*. Professor Adrian Smith (2010) p.7

<sup>7</sup> *Postgraduate Education in the United Kingdom*. Higher Education Policy Institute and the British Library (2010)

<sup>8</sup> Cited, *The government's proposals for higher education funding and student finance – an analysis*. John Thompson and Bahram Bekhradnia

<sup>9</sup> Foreword, *Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011)

<sup>10</sup>

[http://www.migrationexpert.com/uk/visa/uk\\_immigration\\_news/2009/Jan/1/229/Sponsoring\\_students\\_under\\_the\\_points-based\\_system\\_for\\_immigration](http://www.migrationexpert.com/uk/visa/uk_immigration_news/2009/Jan/1/229/Sponsoring_students_under_the_points-based_system_for_immigration)

became extremely important for HEIs to be certain that any international applications met all of the entry criteria before considering an offer of a place. Failure to do this can lead to a revocation of their status as a trusted sponsor.

It is commented both in reports and amongst stakeholders that UK HEIs will face increasing competition from international institutions<sup>11</sup>. A growing number of European countries are delivering courses in English and some are delivered for free or at a comparatively low cost<sup>12</sup>.

Moreover, the recent revisions of immigration rulings entail that it is increasingly likely that international students will have to return to their country of origin after graduating, whereby previously it much easier to gain employment and remain in the UK. This follows the removal in 2012 of the post study work visa that had allowed international students to stay in the UK for up to two years after completion of their studies to find employment. Stakeholders comment that countries such as Australia (where immigration rules are less stringent) are now attracting students that may have previously applied to the UK. In response to this, recommendations have been made that the UK Border Agency should monitor the postgraduate student visa system carefully to ensure that processes run smoothly<sup>13</sup>.

It is particularly difficult to assess the impact of changing fee structure on the international market. It has been suggested that if fees continue to rise unchecked, this may not result in an immediate dip in international students numbers (as the cost of courses may be understood as a mark of quality) but numbers are likely to eventually drop<sup>14</sup>.

However, on the other hand, stakeholders comment that the UK will remain an attractive prospective option to International students. Accreditations from UK institutions will remain desirable and so long as it retains its reputation internationally, students from abroad will always wish to study here.

Currently, as the Smith report comments, the UK's assurance processes are not widely replicated internationally but recommends that measures should be taken to develop a strong UK postgraduate brand to market internationally.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, at an institutional level, UK HEIs are developing new strategies to attract International Students abroad. For example, stakeholders comment that overseas provision is developed in line with a country's anticipated interest or requirements:

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<sup>11</sup> *One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education*. Professor Adrian Smith (2010)

<sup>12</sup> *Postgraduate Education in the United Kingdom*. Higher Education Policy Institute and the British Library (2010)

<sup>13</sup> *One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education*. Professor Adrian Smith (2010) p.10

<sup>14</sup> *Postgraduate Education in the United Kingdom*. Higher Education Policy Institute and the British Library (2010)

<sup>15</sup> *One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education*. Professor Adrian Smith (2010)

Tourism and Hospitality courses are devised specifically for the Malaysian markets and Gas Extraction courses are tailored for an emerging African market.

## Feasibility Study

Prior to the collation of postgraduate application data from HEIs for this project, a feasibility study was conducted to determine the extent of data available and its analysis potential. This stage of the project comprised a quantitative online survey followed by site visits to selected HEIs.

The online survey was distributed to all 141 HEIs across the UK with postgraduate students. The purpose of this survey was to provide an initial overview of the information each institution held on postgraduate applications. The survey also established the earliest point from which data was held, and requested preliminary details about the fields of data that were collected. A total of 86 HEIs responded to the survey (an overall response rate of 61%).

From those responding to the survey, some HEIs were selected for follow-up site visits. Site visits explored in more detail the application data held by each institution, including the information fields held, categories collected for each field, detail on how the information is collected, and the completeness of data. In total site visits with 28 HEIs were conducted.

There were a number of positive findings from the feasibility study in terms of the quality of data held by institutions, which included:

- Application data was generally held centrally in the institutions taking part (rather than held at a department level or similar) which gave reassurance about internal consistency;
- Current students at HEIs (e.g. those currently following their first degree) were generally required to go through the same postgraduate application process as external students offering reassurance on the completeness of databases;
- Although some institutions used UKPASS alongside their own internal systems, this did not impact on the completeness of their internal application database because applications submitted through UKPASS were then replicated on their own system;
- Applications for postgraduate research programmes (for example PhDs) were generally made through the same process as other postgraduate programmes offering potential for analysis of both types of applications (albeit that there was perhaps slightly more scope for potential applicants likely to be unsuccessful to be filtered out through informal discussions with supervisors than is the case for other types of postgraduate study)
- The HEIs that were willing to participate in the main study represented a good spread of organisations by overall size of postgraduate population and by Mission Group.



However, the feasibility study also uncovered a number of complications that resulted from;

- **Variations in the time-period for which HEIs felt confident in the quality and completeness of their data.** The project explored the possibility of analysing application data stretching back over a decade to applications made for study in 2003. While some HEIs held some information dating back this far, it was rare for them to be confident in the quality of data this far back. In most HEIs, the last decade had seen considerable changes in their application processes and their record-keeping more generally. Most of those taking part in the site visits had moved to an application system that is predominantly administered online at some point during this period and they were generally much more confident in the quality of their data after this point. There were very few HEIs confident in their data prior to 2005. In addition, some HEIs only retained application records for 2 years.
- **Different procedures for some postgraduate courses.** Although most HEIs held some records of their PGCE applicants, the use of a pan-HEI application process handled by GTTR meant that HEIs often retained less information about PGCE applicants than they did for applicants to other courses. Similarly, HEIs did not retain information on applications to Integrated Masters courses as part of their postgraduate databases (these were generally considered to be part of the undergraduate admissions process). Some HEIs had other gaps in their databases (for example professional qualifications that are run in partnership with employers where the employer takes responsibility for the application process and only passes on details of students to be enrolled) but these generally accounted for a very small proportion of the overall postgraduate population.
- **Limited participation from Scottish institutions.** Ideally some Scottish institutions would have been included in the study as it might have been valuable to be able to compare the impact of differing HE policy on future applications to Scottish and English HEIs. However, for this to be feasible a number of HEIs would need to be willing to participate (to enable us to ensure anonymity in the reporting of findings that was a prerequisite for most HEIs to consider participation).

On the basis of these findings, a decision was reached to proceed with the collection of application data but to:

- Alter the scope of the study to cover the period from the 2005/06 academic year up to the 2011/12 academic year (rather than obtaining a full decade of application data) and to try to accommodate the fact that different HEIs had different lengths of data available (rather than simply excluding those who could not provide data back to 2005/06).
- To exclude applications for PGCE, and applications for integrated Masters from the study.
- To focus the remainder of the study just on HEIs in England.

## Profile of HEIs providing application data

On the basis of findings from the feasibility study about the nature of data held and willingness to share information, requests for exchange of data were sent to a total of 24 HEIs. Of these HEIs, four were then unable to take part in the next stage. Therefore, a total of 20 HEIs submitted their application data. The initial aim was to collect data from around 30 institutions for this stage but there were insufficient institutions with the breadth of data desired who were willing to exchange data.

Of those providing data, seven provided data from 2005/06 onwards, a further six provided data from 2008/09 onwards, and a further seven provided data from 2010/11 onwards.

Based on findings from the feasibility study about the type of information held consistently across HEIs, organisations were asked to provide information on applications relating to:

- **Demographics** (Gender, Date of birth, ethnicity and disability status);
- **Course type** (Qualification type, Subject area and Mode of study);
- **Domicile**(Home, EU, Non EU – which can be understood as a proxy for Funding Status<sup>16</sup>)
- **Previous HEI** (previous HEI attended and date of previous qualification);
- **Outcomes** (whether offers made and whether offers were taken up)

It had been hoped to also collect information relating to the socio-economic status of applicants but very few institutions systematically recorded information that could be used for this purpose. Similarly it had been hoped to append data about the fees charged for courses to the application data. However, some institutions did not have historical data on fees accessible and some of those that did were not willing to share it.

HEIs were asked to provide the data in such a way that individual students could not be identified.

The table below shows the number of HEIs providing data, broken down by mission group and size of current postgraduate population (using quartiles).

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<sup>16</sup> HEIs commented that it would prove burdensome or even impossible to accurately match applicants' Funding Status to their data file. In most cases Funding Status is assigned to (an often separate) database once a place has been confirmed. However, most HEI representatives said that 'Domicile' would serve as a Inreasonably accurate indicator of candidates' final funding status (should they choose to made be an offer and accept a place to study at the institution).

**Table 1:1 Number of HEIs providing data for each time period, by mission group and quartile**

		Provided data from 2005/06 onwards	Provided data from 2008/09 onwards	Provided data from 2010/11 onwards	Total
<b>Mission Group</b>	Russell Group	2	4	4	10
	Guild HE	2	1	1	4
	Million +	2	-	1	3
	1994 Group	-	-	1	1
	Unaffiliated	2	1	-	3
<b>Postgraduate Taught population quartile</b>	1st (HEIs with largest PG populations)	-	1	3	4
	2nd	3			3
	3rd	1	2	1	4
	4th (HEIs with lowest PG populations)	3	3	3	9
<b>Postgraduate Research population quartile</b>	1st (HEIs with largest PG populations)	-	1	1	2
	2nd	1	1	3	5
	3rd	2	1	1	4
	4th (HEIs with lowest PG populations)	3	1	2	6

NB: The breakdown by mission group over-adds because one institution was a member of 2 mission groups. In addition, three HEIs provided only their PGT data (and not their PGR data)

## Approach to data weighting and analysis

To enable us to look at trends over time going back to 2005/6 using all the data (and not just data from the 7 institutions providing data across the full time period), the data has been weighted.

Since there is no definitive source of population data on applications, there were limited options available for this exercise. The approach that has been taken is to weight data according to the current size of the postgraduate population at each of the participating institutions using data from HESA returns.

The data relating to postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) applications have been weighted separately. For each group of data, the approach that has been taken is to:

1. Rank order all English HEIs with PGR/PGT students by the size of their PGR/PGT population
2. Divide institutions into quartiles defined by the PGR/PGT population (so the first quartile contains the institutions that collectively have a quarter of the total PGR/PGT population)<sup>17</sup>
3. Use this to devise a weight for the records for the first block of application years (05/06-07/08).
4. Re-do this exercise for the other 2 year blocks where data was collected from more institutions.

Once the weighting had been applied, preliminary checks indicated that the approach generated figures that were plausible (based on comparing figures for applications taken-up generated from the application data for 2010/11 with figures for the student population taken from the HESA data).

It is also the case that the data we have for each set of applications years has been provided by institutions who account for a large proportion of the student population. The institutions providing data for the 05/06,06/07 and 07/08 years represent 6% of the 2010/11 PGR population and 7% of the PGT population. Those providing data for 08/09 and 09/10 account for 19% of the 2010/11 PGR population and 12% of the PGT population and those providing data for 10/11 and 11/12 account for 33% of the 2010/11 PGR population and 21% of the PGT population

Nonetheless it is worth bearing in mind that this approach to data weighting is not ideal and hence volumetric estimates presented in this report should probably be treated as indicative. Data that show changes in the profile of students are more reliable.

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<sup>17</sup> \*Although it was necessary to combine the first and second quartiles for the 05/06 -07/08 data for both PGR and PGT (and the 08/09-09/10 data for PGR) in order to derive weights.

## Over-arching caveats on data presented

Due to the complexities of combining applications databases from a number of different institutions, and the nature of the data itself, a number of caveats need to be taken into consideration when considering the findings presented in this report.

The most important point to note is that the data presented here are based on **applications** and not **applicants**. HEIs reported that many individuals make multiple applications to postgraduate study; and they felt that this practice has become increasingly common since the advent of online application forms. However, given that the data for this study was obtained from a sub-set of institutions it would not be possible to conduct the cross-referencing necessary to establish applicant-based data. Even if all HEIs had shared data, those participating in the research indicated that they are not always able to systematically identify multiple applications within their own databases. In addition, it would be very difficult to identify multiple applications across institutions due to the variety of approaches HEIs take to capturing data. It would mean that a means of identifying individual students would need to be shared and most HEIs felt that the anonymity of individual applications was a prerequisite for them sharing data at all.

Other caveats to be borne in mind are that:

- Some institutions indicated that the data on postgraduate research applications may be less complete than that for postgraduate taught applications. In some cases applications to research would be submitted to individual departments rather than going straight into the central system; this can again mean that lower quality applications never get transferred onto the system, and, in some cases, students might enrol and be entered onto the student records database despite having never been entered onto the applications database. Research candidates are also more likely to begin by making an informal enquiry to a department or potential supervisor; therefore candidates who are unlikely to be successful may be discouraged from making an application at this stage. However institutions generally felt that most reasonable applications would appear on their applications database (and that they were actively working towards ensuring that this was the case).
- Filtering of applications can also occur when overseas applications are submitted through agents. A number of institutions stated that they believe that an agent will only send through those applications that they deem to be likely of success (and in some cases this is actively encouraged); therefore, a number of lower quality overseas applications may never make it into the institution's applications database. HEIs found it hard to place a figure on the proportion of applications received by an agent that would then be submitted to them – one suggested a figure of around 50%, while others believed that only a very small number would be filtered out.
- The methods for collecting the data vary between institutions. In some cases, electronic applications forms are used, which then automatically populate the applications database; however, other institutions still use, either entirely or partly, a paper-based application system, where paper forms must then be entered manually into the database. This can lead to different levels of quality in the data (potentially lower quality as there is the possibility of human error during the input stage, as well as potentially higher quality, as the manual input stage presents an opportunity for

obvious errors to be corrected); this system can also lead to poor quality applications being excluded, if it is decided to be not worth the effort of entering onto the database.

- Some HEIs conduct a review of applications data at the point when individuals enrol for a postgraduate course. Where this happens it tends to mean that HEIs are more confident in the quality and completeness of data for students who actually enrol because the data is checked/corrected at enrolment stage, and students are chased up to provide any missing information. This is particularly the case for fields such as ethnicity and disability, as HEIs find candidates are sometimes reluctant to state this information on the application form.

There are some additional caveats on individual data fields but these are mentioned at the beginning of the appropriate chapters.

## Report structure

The data in this report has been structured into 7 chapters of findings

- **Chapter 2** which looks at trends in applications by course type. This chapter explores volumes and profiles of applications by broad grouping – Postgraduate Research compared with Postgraduate Taught courses – and at the level of more detailed qualification types. It also looks at trends in applications by full or part-time study;
- **Chapter 3** which looks at trends in applications by subject area;
- **Chapter 4** which looks at trends in the profile of applications by whether they are from students based in the UK, in the rest of Europe or overseas;
- **Chapter 5** which explores trends in the profile of applications by whether students have studied previously at the HEI or elsewhere;
- **Chapter 6** which explores trends in applications by demographics (age, gender, ethnicity and disability status);
- **Chapter 7** which looks at trends in the ratio of applications that result in an offer of a place to study;
- **Chapter 8** which reports qualitative information on HEIs' opinions on the trends in postgraduate applications that they anticipate for the future. It also looks at the impact on HEIs of participating in this study and makes recommendations for any future data collection exercise.

The large volume of data collected makes it possible to conduct a great deal of sub-group analysis. Throughout the report, we have endeavoured only to conduct sub-group analysis by variables that have already been reported in previous chapters.

# Chapter 2: Trends in applications by course type

**This chapter provides information on trends in the overall volume of applications to both PGR and PGT programmes and also explores trends in applications at the more detailed qualification level. In addition to volumetric estimates, the chapter also looks at trends in the ratio of application numbers to places taken up by course type. Finally, it investigates patterns in applications by full and part-time study**

## 2.1 Overall application numbers

Table 2.1 overleaf sets out estimates produced for the total number of applications to postgraduate study at English HEIs during each of the seven academic years from 2005/06 to 2011/12 inclusive. Figures are provided at the overall level and individually for both PGR and PGT programmes.

Applications to PGR programmes have been defined as including all applications for PhDs; Professional doctorates and Research Masters<sup>18</sup>. Applications to PGT programmes include Masters degrees; Masters of Business Administration (MBAs); Postgraduate diplomas and certificates and Postgraduate credits. As discussed in Chapter 1, PGCE courses and Integrated Masters courses were excluded from the data that HEIs were asked to provide.

The data indicates that over the seven year period, in the region of 7.7 million applications were submitted to study at postgraduate level at English HEIs (combining both PGR and PGT applications). After year on year increases since the 2005/06 academic year, the total number of applications submitted in 2011/12 was encroaching 1.5 million.

In all years, the volume of applications to PGT programmes considerably exceeded the volume of applications to PGR programmes. Across all 7 years, applications to PGT study accounted for 85% of all postgraduate applications.

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<sup>18</sup> The unweighted base size for Higher and Honorary Doctorates was just 4 records. For the purposes of any analysis by PGR qualification type, these records have been excluded.





**Table 2.1: Total number of applications submitted to English HEIs for postgraduate study**

Year	PGR				PGT		All	
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: All Applications	N	% change	N	% change	N	% change
<b>05/06</b>		49,036	113,616		492,559		606,175	
<b>06/07</b>	7	57,386	129,276	14%	563,794	14%	693,070	14%
<b>07/08</b>		67,432	149,015	15%	669,978	19%	818,993	18%
<b>08/09</b>	13	152,070	185,293	24%	1,013,656	51%	1,198,949	46%
<b>09/10</b>		180,298	220,482	19%	1,219,792	20%	1,440,275	20%
<b>10/11</b>	20	301,653	180,341	-18%	1,287,848	6%	1,468,189	2%
<b>11/12</b>		309,497	196,875	9%	1,302,612	1%	1,499,486	2%
<b>Total</b>	20	1,117,372	<b>1,174,898</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>6,550,239</b>	<b>164%</b>	<b>7,725,137</b>	<b>147%</b>

### **2.1.1. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes**

The data indicates that the volume of applications to PGR programmes increased by 73% over the seven year period so that during the 2011/12 academic year over 195,000 applications were received by English HEIs. In total, the data suggests that approximately 1.2 million submissions were received in total between academic years 2005/06 and 2011/12.

Table 2.1 indicates that the volume of applications increased every year, with the notable exception of 2010/11 when the volume of applications was approximately a fifth lower than in 2009/10. Prior to this anomaly, between 2005/6 and 2009/10 the rate of increase was marked each year, with a particularly prominent rise in PGR applications between 07/08 and 08/09 when application numbers increased by just under a quarter (24%). It is interesting that this year saw such a large increase in numbers as this is the first year when the first cohort of undergraduates experiencing increased undergraduate tuition fees (that came into force in 2006) could have been applying to postgraduate study and a decrease in applications might have been hypothesised. When discussing trends with HEIs in case study visits, several identified 2008/09 as a year of increased levels of applications and some felt that this was the result of the onset of economic recession and the lack of graduate jobs available.

In terms of absolute numbers, the highest number of PGR applications was received in 2009/10 when 220,482 applications were received.

In the wake of the dip in applications in 2010/11, the following year in 2011/12 the number of applications once again increased, although at a less marked rate than previous years. Moreover, the total number of applications received fell short of the peak in volume evidenced in 2009/10.

### **2.1.2. Applications to Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes**

Between 2005/6 and 2011/12 the number of applications to study PGT courses increased by 164% over the seven year period. During the most recent academic year (2011/12) when the volume of applications peaked, more than 1.3 million applications were made to PGT study.

Table 2.1 illustrates that unlike PGR applications, the volume of PGT applications increased year on year throughout the 7-year period covered. In fact, there does not appear to be any correlation with the patterns in volume evidenced in PGR applications across the period. For PGT, the most significant increase in applications occurred in the 2008/09 academic year when applications in this year were 51% higher than the number submitted in 2007/08.

Since the 2010/11 academic year the number of applications to PGT programmes has only increased by a proportionately modest amount.

## **2.2. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up**

The vast majority of institutions included in the research were able to cross-reference their application databases with their student databases (where necessary) so that information could also be supplied on whether an application to study was successful i.e. the candidate received an offer to study at the institution and eventually went on to take up a

place on the course. Out of the 17 HEIs that provided PGR data, just one institution was unable to provide information pertaining to student registrations and of the 20 HEIs that provided information for PGT applications, just two were unable to provide this data.

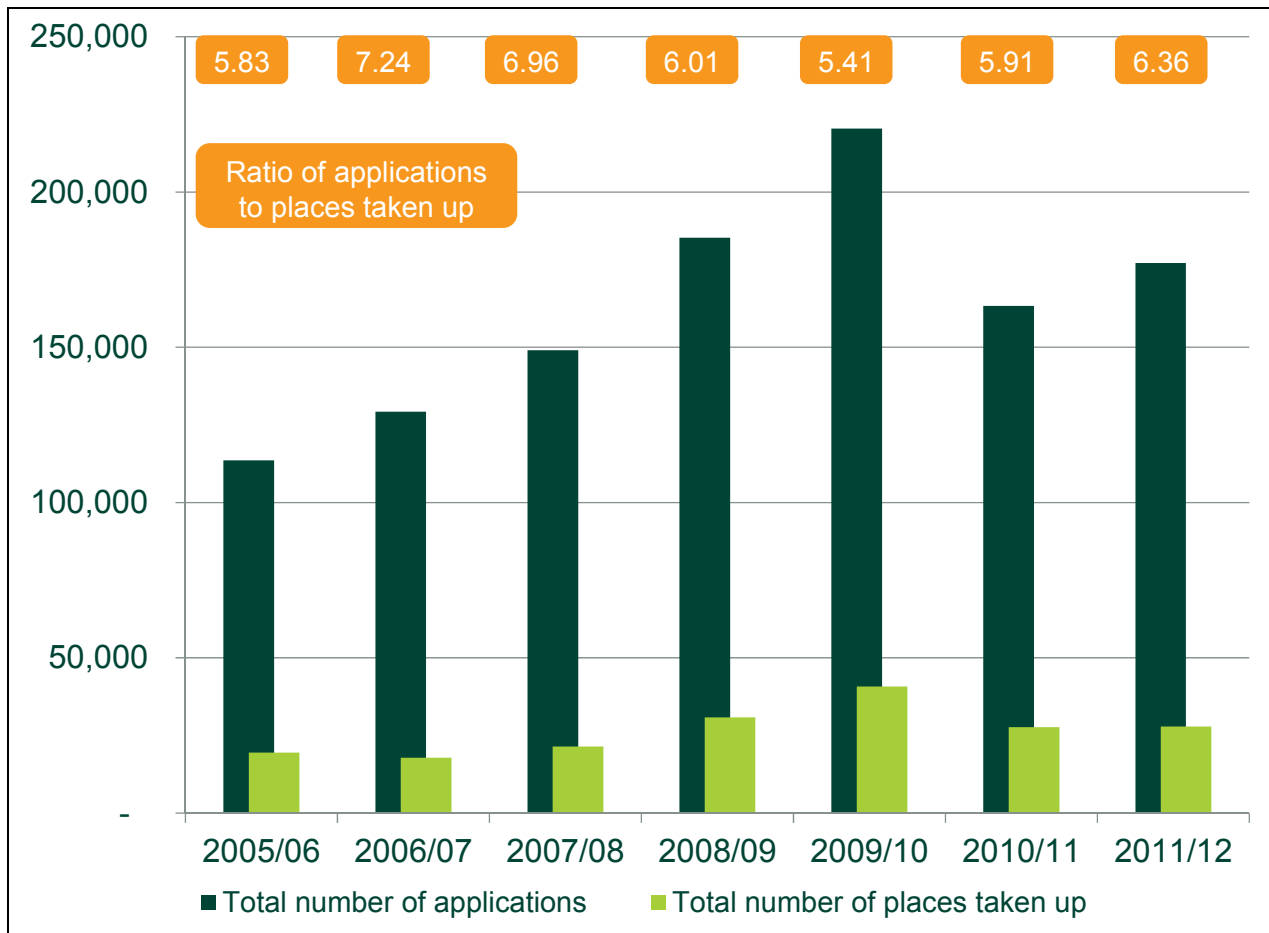
### 2.2.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes

As Figure 2.1 shows overleaf, the ratio of applications for PGR study to places taken up has fluctuated over the 7-year period without an obvious pattern.

Proportionately the lowest number of PGR applications submitted per enrolment was in 2009/10 when approximately 5.4 applications were submitted per registration). Although in 2009/10 both the number of enrolments and total number of applications increased, the number of enrolments did so at a greater rate (32% growth on the previous year in comparison with 19% rise in applications) subsequently resulting in a lower ratio than the previous year.

Comparatively, the highest proportion of applications was submitted in 2006/7 when over 7 applications were received to every one registration. In comparison with the previous year (2005/6), the number of applications had increased by 14% and yet the number of enrolments had decreased by -8% accounting for the notably high ratio.

**Figure 2.1: Ratio of applications to places taken up (PGR)**

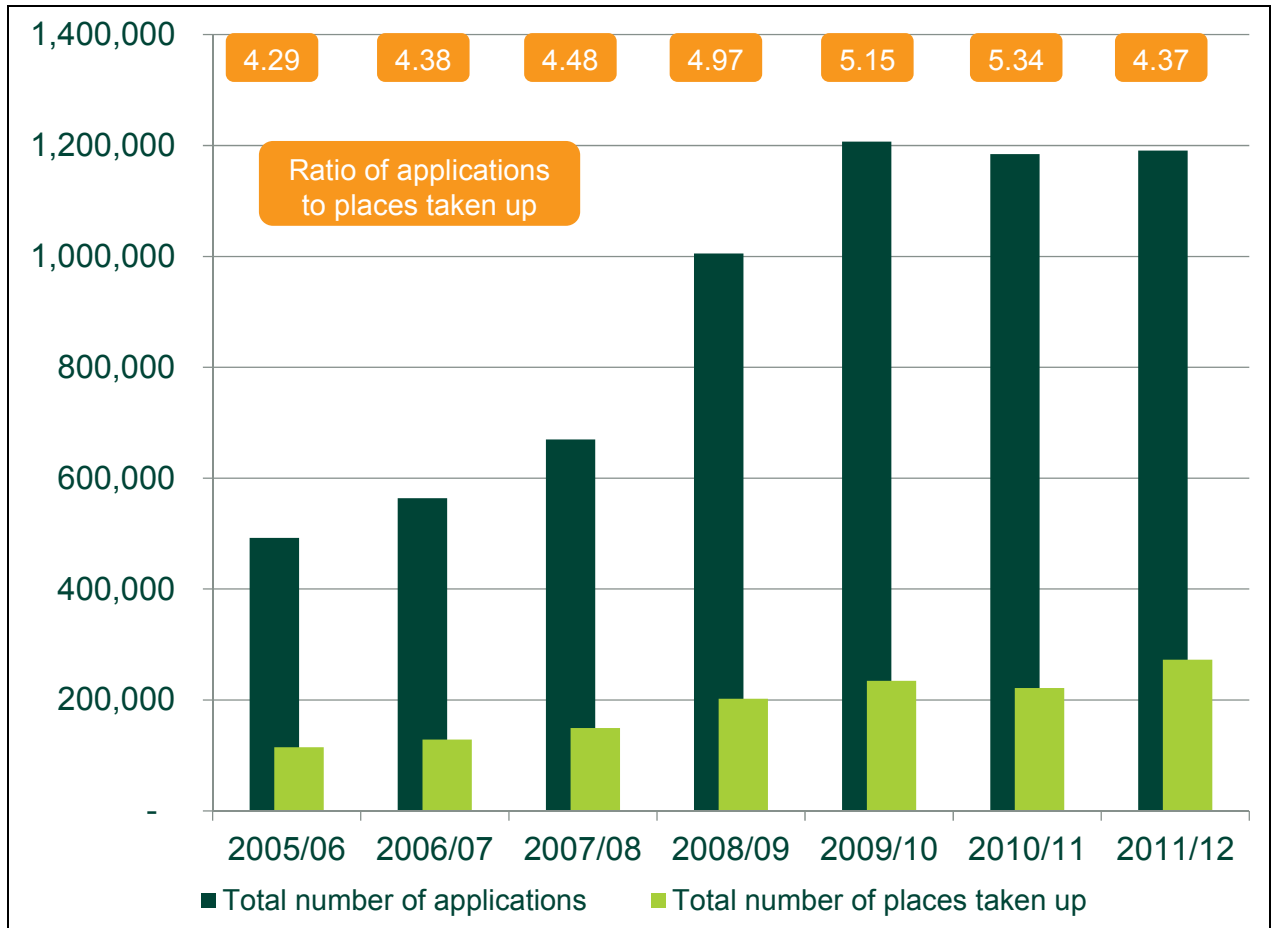


ase: All applications to PGR programmes where enrolment status is yes/no (168,992)  
 (05/06: 5,282), (06/07: 6,563), (07/08: 7639), (08/09:25,658), (09/10: 30,368), (10/11:44,688), (11/12:48794)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

## 2.2.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes

A comparison of the number of applications to and places taken up on taught postgraduate programmes is shown in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Ratio of applications to places taken up (PGT)**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes where enrolment status is yes/no (831,700)  
 (05/06: 42,182), (06/07:49,071), (07/08: 57,517), (08/09:120,774), (09/10:143,186), (10/11:209,108), (11/12:209,862)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

The ratio of applications to places taken up on taught postgraduate courses increased steadily year on year until the most recent academic year (2011/12) when the fewest number of applications were received per enrolment (4.37:1). Although volumes of applications remained consistent with the previous year, the number of enrolments increased by 23% from approximately 220,000 in 2010/11 to 270,000 registrations in 2011/12.

## 2.3. Application rates by detailed qualification type

To better understand the patterns in the demand for specific types of study within PGR and PGT programmes, institutions were asked to provide information on the particular qualification types candidates had applied to.

Qualifications were categorised as outlined below:

### PGR programmes<sup>19</sup>

- **PhDs** (e.g. PhD, DPhil, MPhil)
- **Professional doctorates** (e.g. EngD, DNursSci, VetMD, EdD, DBA, DCLinPsy)
- **Research masters** (e.g. MRes, MLitt)

### PGT programmes

- **Masters degrees** (taught e.g. MA, MSc)
- **Masters of Business Administration** (MBA)
- **Postgraduate diplomas and certificates**

#### 2.3.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes

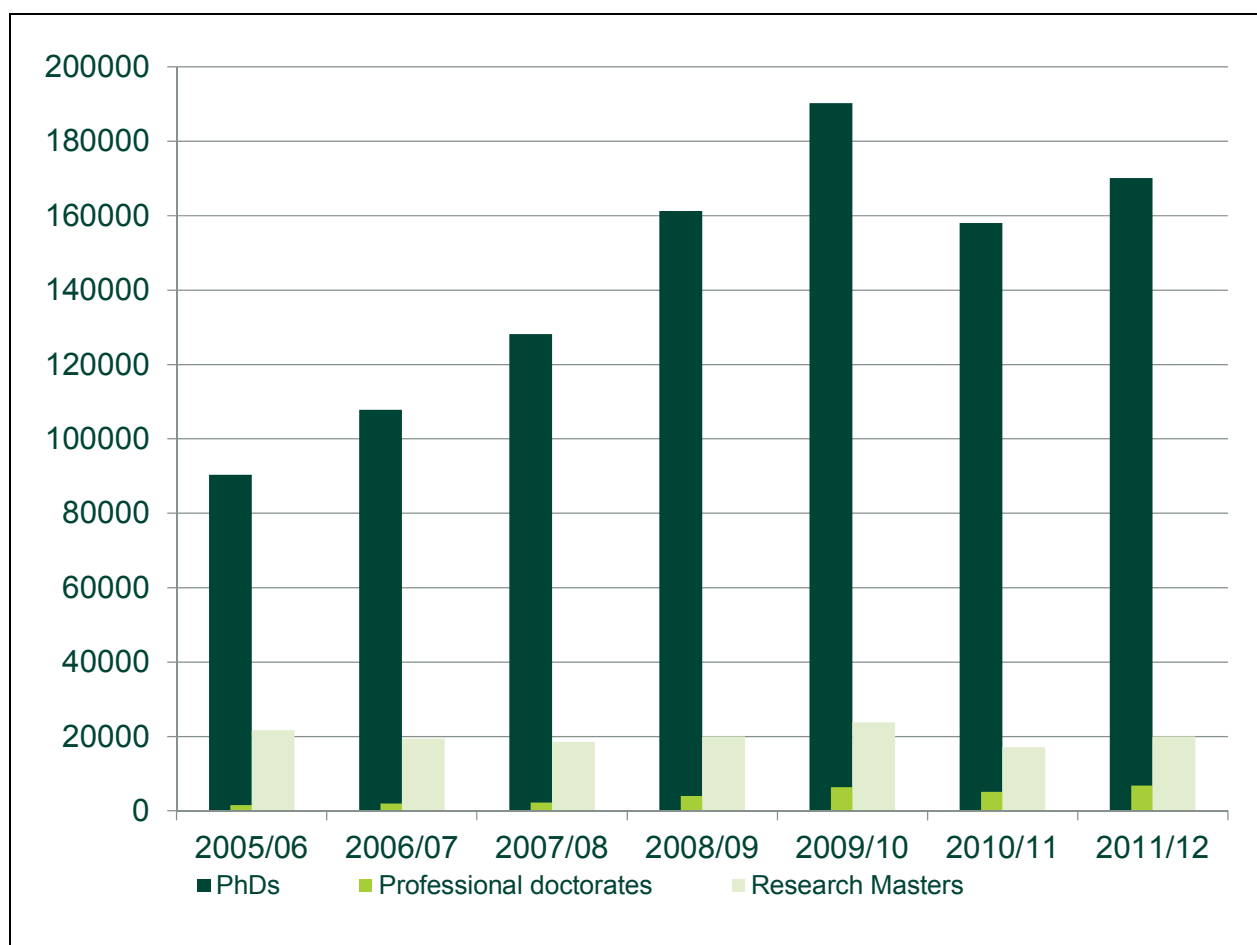
The overwhelming majority of applications to PGR study are made to PhD programmes (which incorporate MPhil courses alongside traditional PhDs). Overall, they comprise 86% of applications made to PGR study across the seven year period. Applications to Research Masters represented 12% of applications submitted across the period and only a tiny minority (2%) of applications were made to study toward Professional Doctorate qualifications.

Overall numbers of applications submitted to PhDs and Professional Doctorates increased over the course of the seven year period; submissions to PhDs increased by 88% and even more so, applications to Professional Doctorates increased by 343% (albeit volumes were considerably smaller). In contrast however, applications to Research Masters actually declined by 8% between 2005/6 and 2011/12.

Figure 2.3 below shows estimates for the number of applications received by English HEIs for each PGR qualification type (PhDs, Professional Doctorates and Research Masters).

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<sup>19</sup> Only 4 applications across all seven years were submitted for Higher Doctorates (unweighted total). These have been excluded from any analysis based on qualification type.

**Figure 2.3: Applications by qualification type (PGR)**

Base: All applications to PGR programmes, excluding those to Higher Doctorates (183,729)  
 (05/06: 5,282), (06/07: 6,563), (07/08: 7,639), (08/09:25,658), (09/10:30,368), (10/11: 51,478), (11/12: 56,741)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

Thus, the sheer volume of applications submitted to PHD courses invariably dictates the overall trends in PGR applications outlined in Table 2.1. For instance, the aforementioned year on year increase in total PGR submissions up until 2009/10 (discussed in Section 2.1.1) evidently reflects the corresponding volumes made to study PhDs; the number of applications submitted to Research Masters courses actually decreases between 2005/06 and 2007/08.

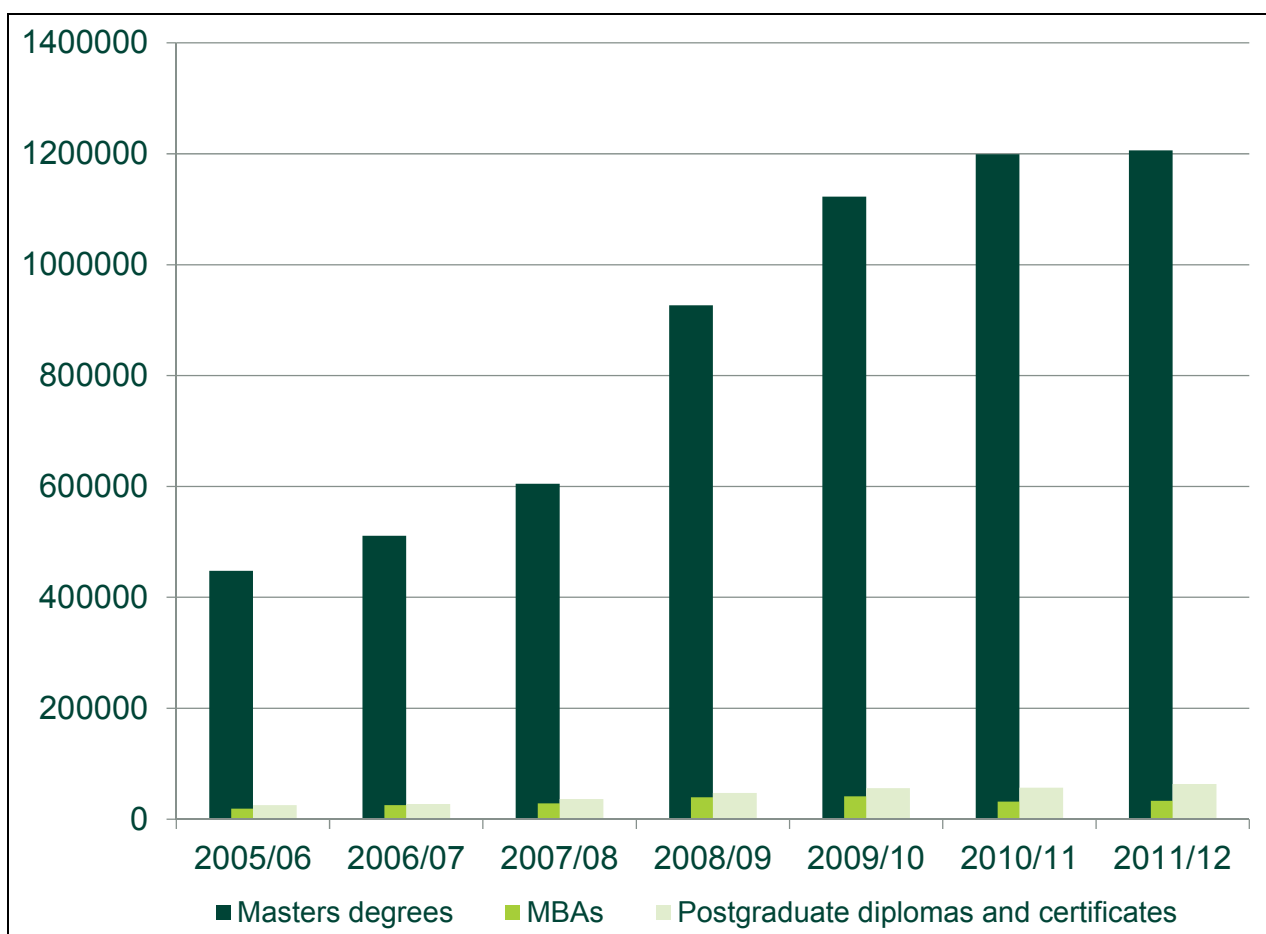
Figure 2.3 also illustrates however that there was a decline in the numbers of applications submitted to all PGR qualifications in 2010/11. In comparison with the previous academic year, there was a 17% decrease in the number of applications submitted to PhDs, a 19% decrease in numbers of applications to Professional Doctorates and most prominently, a 28% decrease in submissions to Research Masters.

### 2.3.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes

Across the period covered, applications to Masters Degrees accounted for 92 per cent of all applications to Taught postgraduate programmes. Applications to Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas represented 5% of submissions across the period and MBAs comprised approximately 3%

Overall, applications to all PGT qualifications increased over the course of the seven year period. Between 2005/6 and 2011/12, the volume of applications submitted to MBA programmes increased by 72%, by 150% for PG Diplomas and Certificates and most markedly, by 169% for Masters Degrees.

**Figure 2.4: Applications by qualification type (PGT)**



Base: All applications to PGT programmes (933,639)  
 (05/06: 43,754), (06/07:50,823), (07/08: 59,793), (08/09:126,412), (09/10:149,930), (10/11:250,173), (11/12:252,754)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

Figure 2.4 indicates that the number of applications to Masters Degrees increased year on year and notably so between 2007/08 and 2008/09 when application numbers increased by 53%. The volume of applications submitted in 2009/10 also denoted a less pronounced, but marked increase of 21% on the previous year. Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 however, this plateaued and the proportion of applications to Masters Degrees increased by less than 1%.



Although they account for a relatively small proportion of all PGT applications, the volume of applications submitted to study toward Postgraduate Diplomas and Credits increased year on year. This was most notably the case between 2006/7 and 2007/8 when the number of applications increased by a third (34%). When discussing trends in data with HEIs, some attributed an increase in applications for postgraduate diplomas and credits to a growing influence of employer sponsored and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) type postgraduate courses. Institutions mentioned recent efforts to enter into dialogue with local businesses about the types of courses they would like to see resulting in the development of more modular postgraduate courses. Institutions offering courses under NHS contracts felt that these had resulted in an increased demand for postgraduate diplomas and certificates.

That said, not all HEIs reported an increase in demand for postgraduate diplomas and certificates. Some reported a decrease in interest in these types of qualification, which they ascribed to the fact that Masters courses offered bring more potential earning power making them a more attractive option in a tighter labour market.

Accounting for the smallest proportion of total PGT applications, the number of submissions to MBAs fluctuated between years. In 2010/11 almost a quarter fewer applications were received than in the previous year (a decrease of 23%). In the most recent academic year (2011/12), applications to MBAs increased modestly by 5%.

## 2.4. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up by detailed qualification type

### 2.4.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes

Table 2.2 shows the applications: places taken up ratios for PGR study at the more detailed level.

**Table 2.2: Ratio of applications to places taken up by qualification type (PGR)**

Year	Qualification type				
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	PhDs	Professional doctorates	Research masters
2005/06	6	5,282	5.28	2.10	13.44
2006/07		6,563	6.86	1.87	18.38
2007/08		7,639	6.75	2.20	13.16
2008/09	10	25,658	5.89	3.31	8.92
2009/10		30,368	5.43	2.00	9.30
2010/11	17	51,478	6.05	2.16	8.25
2011/12		56,741	6.62	2.15	8.64

Across the period covered by the study, the highest ratio of applications to places taken up within PGR programmes was for Research Masters; on average across the period just under 11 applications (10.65) were submitted for every registered place. This peaked in the 2006/07 academic year when over 18 applications were made to each registered place (18.38:1), a notably higher ratio than the average.

This unusually high ratio was driven by a particularly low number of enrolments (1060), rather than a notably high number of applications (19,478); volumes were consistent with the previous and following academic years (21,738 and 18,606 respectively). From 2008/9 onwards, the ratio of applications to Research Masters to registrations decreased (albeit remained high), but proportions remained relatively consistent across the remainder of the period.

Taken as an average across the seven year period, approximately 6 applications to PhDs were submitted to every place taken up (6.05:1). In contrast with applications to Research Masters, this ratio was relatively consistent across the period, albeit the proportion of submissions was also at its highest in 2006/07 (6.86:1).

Conversely, the fewest applications to Professional Doctorates were received in 2006/07 when less than two applications were submitted to every registration (1.87:1). The greatest proportions of applications were received in 2008/09 when over 3 applications were received to every enrolment (3.31:1).

## 2.4.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes

Table 2.3 below shows application to places taken up ratios by PGT qualification type.

**Table 2.3: Ratio of applications to places taken up by qualification type (PGT)**

Year	Qualification type				
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Masters Degrees	MBA's	Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates
2005/06	7	43,754	4.91	2.74	1.51
2006/07		50,823	4.94	3.01	1.63
2007/08		59,793	5.02	3.36	1.77
2008/09	13	126,412	5.36	6.17	1.88
2009/10		149,930	5.69	4.22	1.85
2010/11	20	250,173	5.96	3.36	1.84
2011/12		252,754	4.83	2.46	1.73

Across the seven year period, the ratio of PGT applications to registrations was highest for Masters Degrees programmes where approximately 5 applications were received to each enrolment (5.30:1). Comparatively, 3.5 applications were received to each MBA registration (3.48:1) and approximately 2 submissions were received to every registration for a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate (1.76:1).

For both Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, the ratio of applications to enrolment was consistent across the period.

However, Table 2.3 indicates that in 2008/09 the ratio of MBA applications to enrolment was particularly high (6.17:1). Once again this unusually high ratio was driven by a particularly low number of enrolments (-25% in comparison with 2007/8), rather than a notably high number of applications.

## 2.5. Mode of study

The next section focusses on the volume of applications to PGR and PGT programmes by the intended mode of study. The following section distinguishes between applications made for full-time study, part-time study and 'other' modes (which predominantly constitute sandwich courses and distance learning).

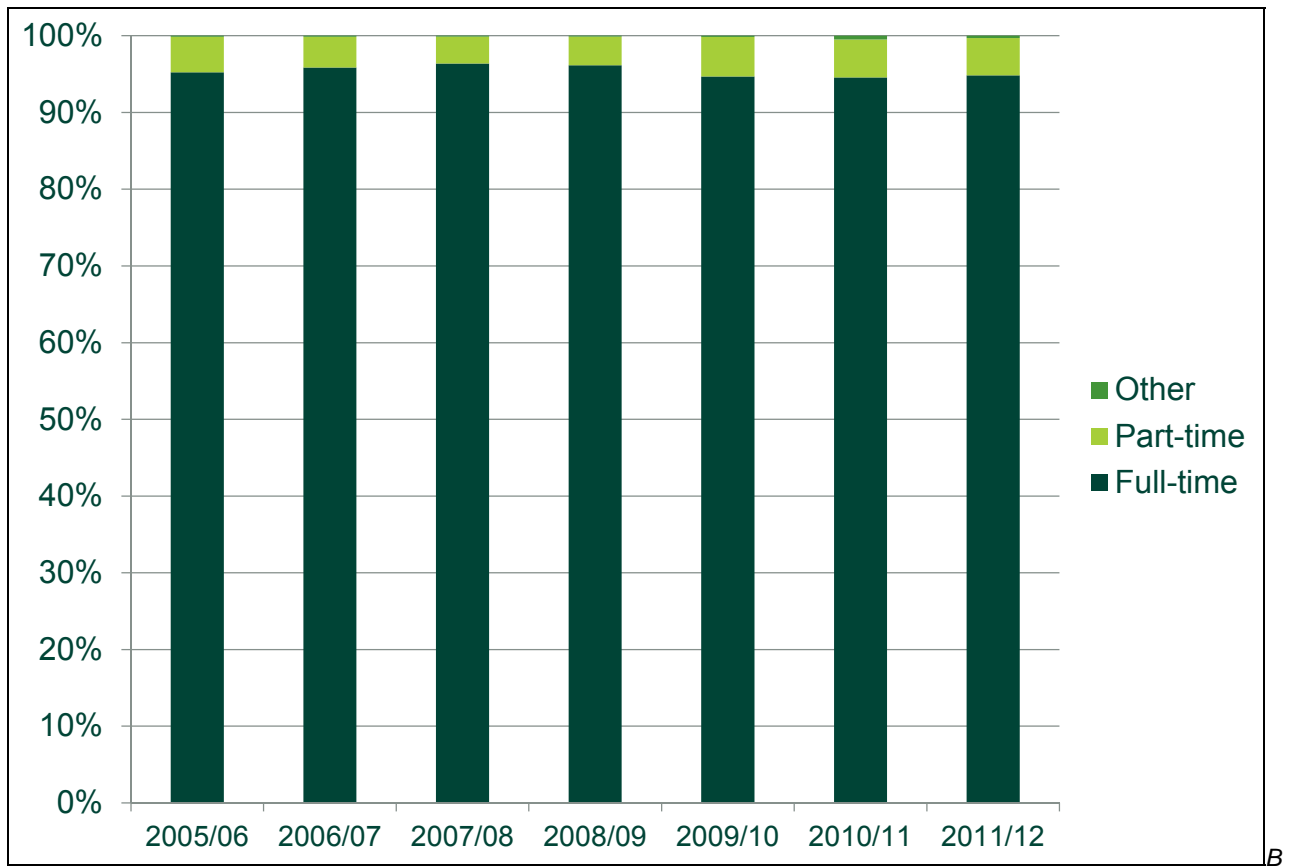
There are a few caveats to note in interpreting this data:

- A couple of HEIs mentioned that in their experience it is fairly common for a candidate to apply for full-time study initially, but then switch to part-time once their study is underway. The data presented here is just based on preferences expressed at the application stage.
- A number of HEIs mentioned that some courses labelled as 'full-time' in fact only require students to be present on campus for one or two days per week; these courses would therefore still provide a level of flexibility for students who are also in employment, in a way perhaps typically associated with part-time courses.
- Offering flexibility in delivery is a key consideration for many HEIs as they seek to develop their course offerings during increasingly challenging economic times. Many are using a range of tools to enable students to structure their studies in a way that suits them best. As such, some HEIs felt a distinction between full-time and part-time study might be less meaningful in more recent years (and even more so in the future) than it had been in the past.

### 2.5.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes

Figure 2.5 shows that the vast majority of applications to PGR programmes (95 per cent) were to full-time study in each year covered by the research). It also indicates that applications to each mode of study were consistent year on year; applications to full-time study comprised either 94% or 95% of applications each year.

**Figure 2.5: Applications by mode of study (PGR)**



Base: All applications to PGR programmes where mode of study known (183,625)  
 (05/06: 5,282), (06/07: 6,563), (07/08: 7,639), (08/09: 25,658), (09/10: 30,368), (10/11: 51,478), (11/12: 56,637)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

**Table 2.4: Mode of study according to specific qualification type (PGR)**

		Qualification type / Mode of Study									
		PhDs			Professional Doctorates			Research Masters			
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other
<b>2005/06</b>	6	5,282	95%	5%	<1%	63%	37%	1%	100%	<1%	<1%
<b>2006/07</b>		6,563	96%	4%	<1%	56%	44%	<1%	99%	1%	<1%
<b>2007/08</b>		6,639	95%	5%	<1%	65%	35%	<1%	99%	1%	<1%
<b>2008/09</b>	10	25,658	96%	3%	<1%	73%	27%	<1%	99%	1%	<1%
<b>2009/10</b>		30,368	96%	4%	<1%	50%	50%	<1%	98%	1%	<1%
<b>2010/11</b>	17	51,478	96%	4%	<1%	54%	41%	6%	97%	3%	1%
<b>2011/12</b>		56,637	96%	4%	<1%	58%	37%	5%	96%	3%	1%

Table 2.4 on the previous page shows the breakdown in mode of study by each PGR qualification.

On average, across the seven year period, applications to study full-time accounted for;

- 98% of Research Masters
- 96% of PhDs;
- 58% of Professional Doctorates

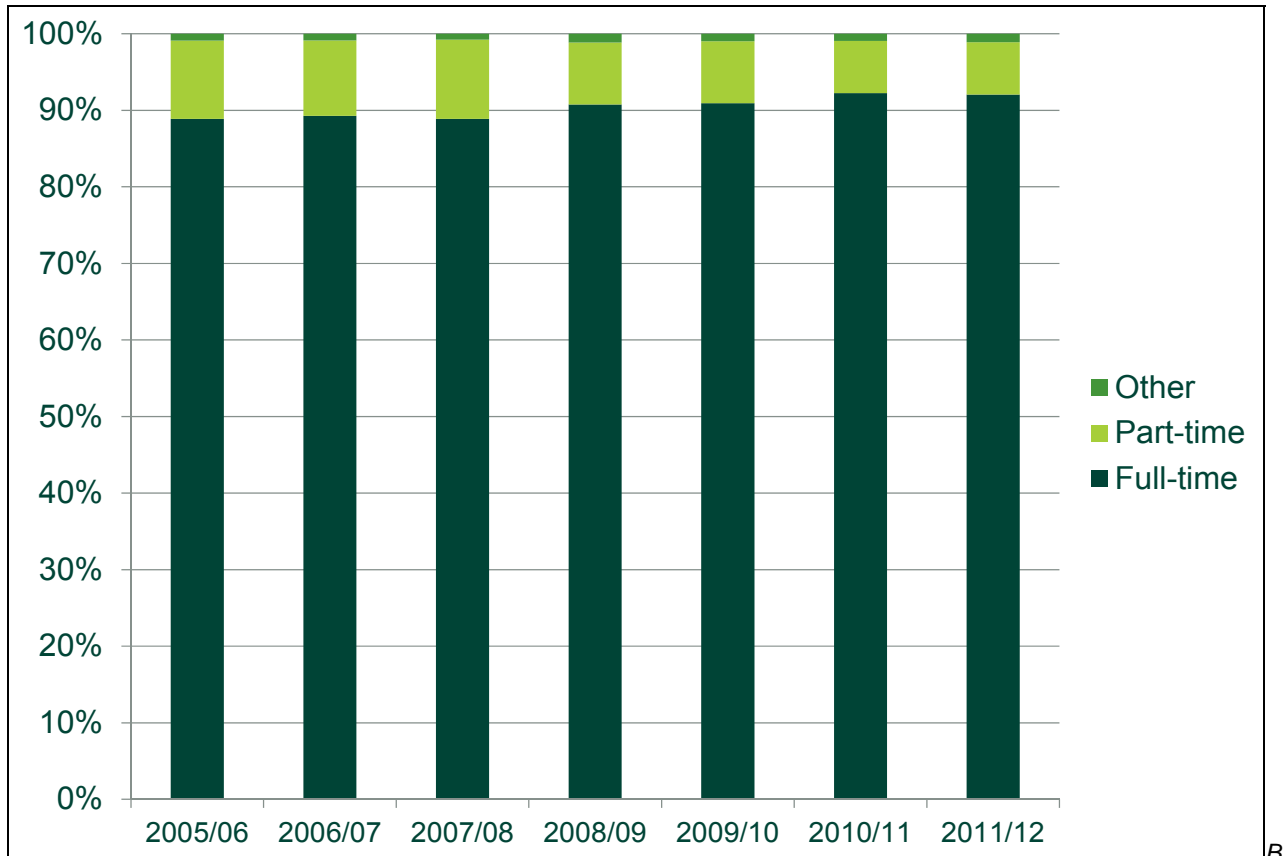
Across the seven year period, the vast majority of applications submitted to both PhDs and Research Masters were for intended full time study. For both, these proportions were relatively consistent year on year – although notably nearly 100% of candidates applying in 2005/6 to undertake a Research Masters proposed to study full time.

On average, approximately six in ten applications (58%) made to study Professional Doctorates were for full-time courses but there was some differentiation year on year. In 2008/9 just less than three quarters (73%) of applications were for intended full-time study, but in 2009/10, half of applicants intended to study part-time. Whilst it is difficult to understand why these fluctuations occurred year on year, at a more general level, Professional Doctorates are frequently undertaken mid-career and thus more likely to be conducted on a part-time basis.

## 2.5.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes

Figure 2.6 below shows the breakdown of applications for PGT programmes by the mode of study applied for.

**Figure 2.6: Applications by mode of study (PGT)**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes where mode of study known (933,629)  
 (05/06: 43,754), (06/07:50,823), (07/08: 59,792), (08/09:126,412), (09/10:149,930), (10/11:250,164), (11/12:252,754)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

As seen in relation to PGR applications, the vast majority of applications made to PGT programmes were for full-time study (91%). This has remained consistent across the period; between 89% and 92% of applications were for intended full-time study in each of the seven years.

As an average across the seven years, 8% of applications were submitted for part-time study and just 1% submitted to other study options.



**Table 2.5: Mode of study according to specific qualification type (PGT)**

	Qualification type / Mode of Study										
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Masters Degrees			MBAs			Postgraduate diplomas and certificates		
			F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other
<b>2005/06</b>	7	43,754	93%	7%	1%	75%	19%	6%	31%	68%	1%
<b>2006/07</b>		50,823	93%	7%	1%	78%	17%	5%	37%	62%	1%
<b>2007/08</b>		59,792	92%	7%	1%	81%	15%	4%	41%	59%	<1%
<b>2008/09</b>	13	126,412	93%	6%	1%	92%	7%	1%	49%	43%	8%
<b>2009/10</b>		149,930	93%	6%	1%	89%	10%	1%	46%	47%	7%
<b>2010/11</b>	20	250,164	95%	5%	1%	88%	11%	<1%	46%	49%	5%
<b>2011/12</b>		252,754	95%	4%	1%	80%	20%	<1%	46%	48%	6%

On average, across the seven year period, applications to study full-time accounted for;

- 94% of Masters Degrees;
- 84% of MBAs and
- 44% of Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates

Between 2005/6 and 2011/12 the proportion of full time applicants to Masters courses were relatively consistent, albeit highest in the two most recent academic years (95%).

There was more variation in relation to MBAs; in 2008/9 92% of submissions were to part time study in comparison with just 75% in 2005/6 when proportionately the least full time applications were received. In the most recent academic year eight out of ten MBA applications were for intended full-time study, slightly lower than the seven year average (84%).

A comparatively smaller proportion of full time applications are submitted to Postgraduate Certificates, peaking in 2008/9 when half of applications (49%) were for intended full time study. However there has been a general increase since 2005/6 when just three in ten applications (31%) were to full time courses, comparatively in the last three years 46% of applications have been consistently made for intended full-time study. Yet, the increase in applications to full time study has been less marked than the decrease in applications to part-time study which between 2005/6 and 2011/12 which declined from representing 68% of applications to Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas to 48%. Since 2008/9 Applications to 'Other' modes of study (such as Distance Learning) became more prominent comprising between 5-8% of applications for the last four years.

### **2.5.3. Qualitative feedback from HEIs about mode of study**

During site visit discussions, HEIs reported mixed experiences of the changes in demand for different modes of postgraduate study. Hence it seems possible that the relatively stable picture in terms of the split between full-time and non-full-time study shown at overall level may disguise more change at the levels of individual HEIs (in both directions).

Several universities felt that they had seen a trend of increasing demand for part-time study. They felt this was driven by financial necessity with reductions in funding available and the economic downturn leading more students to work to support themselves throughout their studies.

However, some other institutions felt they had seen a decrease in the proportion of students studying part-time. This was generally the case where increasing volumes of international students were driving growth in the proportion of applications for full-time study. Table 2.6 and Table 2.7 overleaf support this notion; at both PGR and PGT level, a significantly higher (and consistent) proportion of International and EU candidates apply to full time.

Moreover, some HEIs felt that an increasing attempt to provide courses that employers are prepared to sponsor had led to a decrease in part-time study offers as they felt that employers prefer to release their staff for shorter periods of full-time study.

**Table 2.6: Mode of study according to Domicile (PGR)**

		Domicile / Mode of Study									
		UK domiciled			Other EU			Non-EU			
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other
<b>2005/06</b>	6	5,225	86%	14%	<1%	96%	4%	<1%	98%	2%	<1%
<b>2006/07</b>		6,528	87%	12%	<1%	96%	4%	<1%	98%	2%	<1%
<b>2007/08</b>		7,579	88%	12%	<1%	94%	6%	<1%	97%	3%	<1%
<b>2008/09</b>	10	25,481	89%	10%	<1%	96%	4%	<1%	98%	2%	<1%
<b>2009/10</b>		30,190	84%	16%	<1%	96%	4%	<1%	98%	2%	<1%
<b>2010/11</b>	17	50,745	87%	13%	1%	96%	4%	<1%	97%	2%	<1%
<b>2011/12</b>		55,913	87%	12%	<1%	96%	3%	<1%	97%	2%	<1%

Table 2.7: Mode of study according to Domicile (PGT)

			Domicile / Mode of Study								
			UK domiciled			Other EU			Non-EU		
			F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other	F/T	P/T	Other
	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications									
2005/06	7	42,543	55%	42%	4%	94%	6%	<1%	97%	3%	<1%
2006/07		49,475	56%	40%	4%	95%	5%	<1%	97%	3%	<1%
2007/08		58,178	53%	43%	3%	93%	7%	<1%	97%	3%	<1%
2008/09	13	123,818	66%	32%	2%	93%	5%	2%	98%	2%	<1%
2009/10		147,219	64%	34%	2%	92%	6%	1%	98%	2%	1%
2010/11	20	245,134	64%	34%	2%	93%	6%	1%	98%	1%	1%
2011/12		247,052	61%	36%	3%	92%	7%	1%	98%	2%	1%

# Chapter 3: Trends in applications by subject area

**This chapter provides information on trends in the profile of applications by broad subject area. It looks separately at the subject distribution of PGR and PGT applications.**

## **3.1. Caveats on the data**

The data provided on subject area for applications was generally good quality and complete.

For ease of analysis, applications for courses that covered more than one subject area have been classed as 'unknown and combined subjects'.

It is also worth noting that base sizes for some of the less common subject areas are quite low, particularly in the earlier years of the period covered. This means that some of the analysis on ratios of applications to places taken up for these subjects should be treated as indicative only.

## **3.2. Application rates by detailed subject breakdown**

### **3.2.1. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes by subject**

Table 3.1 overleaf shows estimates for both the volume and proportions of PGR applications submitted for each subject area in each application year.

Table 3.1: PGR Applications by Subject Area

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		6		10		17	
<i>Base: All Applications</i>	5282	6563	7639	25,658	30,368	51,480	56,743
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>		1,515	2,035	6,198	9,005	6,918	7,723
		1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	4%
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>				5,082	8,107	8,247	11,175
				3%	4%	5%	6%
<b>Biological sciences</b>	4,188	7,878	11,268	10,300	12,436	16,748	17,051
	4%	6%	8%	6%	6%	9%	9%
<b>Veterinary sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>				955	1,167	655	620
				1%	1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Chemistry</b>	1,624	2,345	2,395	2,977	3,709	4,513	4,871
	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
<b>Physics</b>	1,512	1,760		2,752	2,974	2,509	3,006
	1%	1%		1%	1%	1%	2%
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2,265	4,434	5,557	4,511	5,482	7,391	8,187
	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%	4%
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3,883	4,129	5,123	6,148	5,755	5,738	5,632
	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Computer science</b>	4,905	5,993	6,602	6,507	7,821	7,434	7,793

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>/ librarianship / information science</b>	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	11,823	15,495	17,627	21,516	26,224	22,374	25,972
	10%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	13%
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	54,871	52,813	58,139	55,176	63,295	42,118	44,735
	48%	41%	39%	30%	29%	23%	23%
<b>Law</b>	5,608	6,327	7,357	7,712	7,711	6,085	7,253
	5%	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	11,032	15,111	16,503	20,999	24,082	18,992	19,895
	10%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%	10%
<b>Languages</b>	1,947	2,857	3,511	7,484	9,398	7,020	7,628
	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%
<b>Humanities</b>	5,497	4,333	6,070	9,088	12,483	9,264	10,106
	5%	3%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>			1,622	2,240	3,060	2,451	2,885
			1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Education</b>	1,409	2,237	3,160	4,201	4,887	4,602	5,346
	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>				11,447	12,886	7,288	7,002
				6%	6%	4%	4%

Grey shaded cells indicate where figures have been suppressed due to low base sizes

Across the seven year period, submissions to Social / Political / Economic studies accounted for the largest single proportion of PGR applications representing approximately a third (32%) of all applications received between 2005/6 and 2011/12.

However, a smaller proportion of applications were submitted Social / Political / Economic studies each year. Between 2005/6 and 2011/1 the proportion of applications made to this area nearly halved from 48% to 23% respectively. That said, this subject area still represented the highest proportion of applications (by some distance) in the most recent academic year.

In addition to this large decrease in the proportion of applications, the data indicates that there has been a steady reduction in the overall volume of applications for to Social / Political / Economic studies from approximately 55,000 in 2005/06 to less than 45,000 in 2011/12 (an 18% decline in numbers over the course of the period)

Following Social / Political / Economic studies, the second highest proportion of PGR applications were submitted to Engineering / Technology / Building / Architecture accounting for 12% of all applications submitted across the period. Across the seven years, the proportion of applications submitted to this subject area gradually increased from 10% in 2005/06 to 13% in 2011/12.

Applications to Business and Administrative studies comprised the third largest proportion of PGR submissions, accounting for 11% per cent of applications submitted across the period.

Applications for Biological sciences increased notably during the 7 year period; they comprised 4% of all PGR applications in 2005/06, but 9% in 2011/12. .

Subjects allied to medicine also increased steadily from representing 3% of PGR applications in 2008/09 to 6% in 2011/12. Table 3.1 indicates that the proportion of applications submitted to the remaining subject areas remained relatively consistent across the seven year period.

### **3.2.2. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGT) Programmes by subject**

Table 3.2 overleaf shows both the numbers and proportions of PGT applications submitted to each subject area each year.



Table 3.2: PGT Applications by Subject Area

	2005 /06	2006 /07	2007 /08	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7		13		20		
<i>Base: All applications</i>	43,754	50,823	59,793	126,412	149,930	250,173	252,754
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>		1501	1,997	36,320	45,350	25,339	28,065
		<1%	<1%	4%	4%	2%	2%
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>	12,539	12,214	18,495	51,152	62,916	50,494	54,877
	3%	2%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%
<b>Biological sciences</b>	14,763	16,069	21,399	23,846	23,699	32,561	28,895
	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%
<b>Veterinary sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	4,504	5,068	4,629	7,341	7,433	7,271	6,354
	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
<b>Chemistry</b>	2,303	2,896	4,290	5,472	5,067	4,793	4,644
	<1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Physics</b>						1,255	1,874
						<1%	<1%
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	16,106	18,271	22,891	23,975	26,610	28,493	27,175
	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	9,689	11,465	17,619	21,637	31,984	31,090	30,279
	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
<b>Computer</b>	27,663	28,278	30,230	60,561	72,930	71,013	70,059

	2005 /06	2006 /07	2007 /08	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12
<b>science / librarianship / information science</b>	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%	5%
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	50,500	62,247	73,155	126,122	139,792	156,986	158,209
	10%	11%	11%	12%	11%	12%	12%
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	125,061	135,994	138,004	150,252	170,052	217,639	211,250
	25%	24%	21%	15%	14%	17%	16%
<b>Law</b>	31,495	35,194	40,270	81,559	87,191	67,264	64,951
	6%	6%	6%	8%	7%	5%	5%
<b>Business / administrativ e studies</b>	151,685	181,254	230,099	314,082	404,112	430,726	461,705
	31%	32%	34%	31%	33%	33%	35%
<b>Languages</b>	9,645	11,406	13,024	30,904	40,811	43,704	40,782
	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Humanities</b>	14,633	18,243	19,877	26,051	27,449	26,021	23,306
	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	7,118	7,916	10,866	12,058	14,290	22,193	22,949
	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
<b>Education</b>	13,870	15,649	22,886	32,171	39,736	42,387	39,038
	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>				9,996	19,698	28,618	28,198
				1%	2%	2%	2%

Grey shaded cells indicate where figures have been suppressed due to low base sizes

Across the seven year period, submissions to Business / Administrative studies accounted for the largest single proportion of PGT applications representing approximately a third (33%) of all applications received between 2005/6 and 2011/12. Table 3.2 indicates that there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of applications submitted to the subject area over the course of the seven year period; submissions to Business / administrative studies represented 31% of all PGT applications in 2005/6 in comparison with 35% in 2011/12.

The second most popular PGT subject area was Social / Political / Economic studies, comprising just less than a fifth of applications (18%) submitted across the seven year period. However, mirroring trends evidenced in PGR submissions, there was also a decline in the associated proportion of applications submitted to Social / Political / Economic studies each year. In 2005/6, a quarter (25%) of all PGR applications were for intended study on Social / Political / Economic courses; by 2011/12 they represented on only 16%. Yet crucially unlike PGR applications, the absolute number of PGT applications to Social / Political / Economic studies did not decline over the period (volumes increased by 69% over the course of the seven years), but notably, as an expression of total applications, it did not increase at the same rate as other subject areas.

On average, 12% of applications submitted across the period were to Engineering / Technology / Building / Architectural courses; Table 3.2 reveals a slight increase in the proportion of applications submitted between 2005/6 and 2011/12.

### 3.3. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up by detailed qualification type

#### 3.3.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes

Table 3.3 below provides detail on the ratio of applications to places taken up according to specific subject areas within PGR programmes. Scoping all subject areas across all seven years, on average roughly six PGR applications were submitted for every registration (6.12:1).

**Table 3.3: Ratio of applications to places taken up by subject area (PGR)**

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6		10		16		
<i>Base: All Applications</i>	5,282	6,563	7639	25,658	30,368	44,688	48794
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>		3.7	2.7	4.6	3.4	4.2	4.3
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>				4.3	3.5	4.6	5.2
<b>Biological sciences</b>	2.3	4.2	4.9	4.2	3.8	5.1	5.1
<b>Veterinary sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	9.3	16.0		6.7	5.6	7.2	8.0
<b>Chemistry</b>	2.9	5.5	5.1	4.7	3.9	4.8	5.7
<b>Physics</b>	2.6	3.5	4.0	4.6	4.6	5.3	6.2
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2.6	7.2	5.8	5.5	5.8	5.3	6.7
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	5.8	5.9	6.8	8.3	9.4	9.7	7.9
<b>Computer science /</b>	8.4	8.5	10.2	7.6	7.2	6.5	6.5

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>librarianship / information science</b>							
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	4.1	4.9	5.1	5.4	5.1	5.5	6.3
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	9.3	11.4	9.6	8.8	8.8	10.6	10.4
<b>Law</b>	11.9	8.5	11.2	9.3	10.8	8.6	13.4
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	6.8	10.7	12.3	10.6	9.2	8.4	10.4
<b>Languages</b>	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.6	4.0	4.6
<b>Humanities</b>	3.6	4.3	3.8	3.8	3.0	3.2	3.5
<b>Creative arts / design</b>			2.9	3.1	3.0	3.3	4.0
<b>Education</b>	5.1	6.8	6.9	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.5
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>				4.1	4.0	4.7	4.4

Grey shaded cells indicate where figures have been suppressed due to low base sizes

Within almost all subject areas, the ratio of applications to enrolments increased between 2005/06 and 2011/12 (with Veterinary Science<sup>20</sup>, Computer Science and Education as exceptions).

As Table 3.3 indicates, the ratio of applications to registrations varies quite considerably between subject areas. Across the period, the highest application to enrolment ratios were evidenced in Law (13.4:1), Business Administration (10.4:1) and Social / Political / Economic studies (10.4:1) indicating that although the highest number of applications are

<sup>20</sup> A degree of caution should be exercised in the analysis of applications to Veterinary Sciences / Agriculture / related subjects as data presented has been based on notably low unweighted base sizes.

submitted to these subject areas, proportionately the number of registrations on these courses are relatively low.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, there has been a marked decline over the 7 year period in the number of PGR applications submitted to Social / Political / Economic studies. However, the ratios shown in Table 3.3 demonstrate that throughout the period, the ratio of applications to places taken up has remained relatively consistent and does not appear to bear correlation with the volume of applications received. Hence, this would seem to suggest that the supply of places on these courses has adjusted in line with changes in demand.

Medicine and Dentistry, Subjects Allied to Medicine and Creative Arts and Design showed the three lowest ratios of applications to places taken up within PGR programmes. However, in all three cases the ratio of applications to enrolments increased over the course of the seven years. In 2006/07, the ratio of applications to enrolments for Medicine and Dentistry was 3.7:1, which had increased to 4.3:1 in 2011/12. Similarly, the ratio of applications to enrolments for Subjects allied to Medicine in 2008/09 was 4.3:1, which increased to 5.2:1 in 2011/12. In turn, the ratio of applications to Creative Arts and Design increased from 2.9:1 in 2007/08 to 4:1 in 2011/12.

### 3.3.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes

Table 3.4 below shows the ratios of applications to places taken up for PGT programmes by subject area.

**Table 3.4: Ratio of applications to places taken up by subject area (PGT)**

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7		12		18		
<i>Base: All applications</i>	42,182	49,071	57,517	120,774	143,186	209,108	209,862
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>		7.3	6.6	3.0	3.4	3.2	1.7
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.5
<b>Biological sciences</b>	4.0	3.7	3.8	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.0
<b>Veterinary sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	5.1	5.5	4.8	5.4	5.3	4.6	5.6

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Chemistry</b>	5.0	4.9	4.3	6.7	7.4	7.7	8.2
<b>Physics</b>						4.5	7.5
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4.2	4.8	4.5	4.8	5.3	5.1	5.2
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	5.4	6.8	12.2	9.4	5.9	6.8	4.5
<b>Computer science / librarianship / information science</b>	5.1	4.4	4.9	5.1	5.7	6.3	4.6
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	4.7	4.4	4.5	6.1	5.4	5.6	5.4
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.5	6.4	6.0	5.0
<b>Law</b>	3.9	5.0	5.8	4.2	4.9	5.5	3.5
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	4.5	4.5	4.7	7.0	6.9	6.9	5.2
<b>Languages</b>	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.5	4.1	5.3	4.2
<b>Humanities</b>	2.4	2.6	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.8
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.8	3.2	3.8	4.3
<b>Education</b>	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>				5.2	4.9	5.0	5.0

Grey shaded cells indicate where figures have been suppressed due to low base sizes

The ratios of applications to places taken up for Taught programmes were generally slightly lower than for postgraduate Research programmes. Across all subject areas over the seven year period, just less than 5 applications were submitted for each enrolment. (4.8:1).

At an overall level, Table 3.4 indicates that by academic year the peaks in the proportions of applications appear to be unconnected. However, the lowest ratios of applications to enrolments are generally more prevalent in the earlier years of the period (2005/06 and 2006/07) than later.

As was the case for PGR study, the decline in the proportion of applications for Social / Political / Economic studies over the 7 year period was not accompanied by an oscillation in the application to places taken up ratio which stood at between 5:1 and 6:1 in all years apart from 2009/10. Again this indicates that the supply of places on PGT courses in Social / Political / Economic studies has adjusted in line with changes in demand.

Across the period, the highest ratio of applications was for Mathematical Sciences; on average 6.5 applications were received for each registration. Yet, between years these proportions fluctuated more so than any other subject area. In 2007/08 over 12 applications (12.2:1) applications were received for every registration, but in notable contrast, just 4.5 applications (4.5:1) were received to each enrolment in 2011/12.

In 2011/12, the highest ratio of applications to enrolments was for Chemistry, at 8.2:1. The ratio of applications to enrolments had increased year on year since 2007/08. On average across the period, approximately 6.2 Chemistry applications were received for every registration, only exceeded by the overall proportion of applications to Mathematical Sciences.

In 2011/12 the lowest ratio of applications to places taken up was for Medicine and Dentistry; less than two applications were received for every registration (1.7:1). Since 2006/07 the ratio for Medicine and Dentistry had decreased in all years but one (and notably so between 2007/08 and 2008/09). As an average across the period just less than 3 applications were received to each enrolment (2.8:1); only the ratio of applications to Education courses was lower (2.6:1).

### **3.4. Qualitative feedback from HEIs discussions on the changing nature of demand by subject area**

Qualitative discussions with HEIs about their application data confirmed the trends described earlier in this chapter.

HEIs mentioned that increases in the demand for STEM subjects in both PGR and PGT courses had been fuelled both by international and domestic demand. HEIs mentioned a preference among international students (and particularly those from India and China) for STEM subjects (in some cases because they are more likely to receive funding from their own governments for these courses). Some HEIs also felt that an increasing focus on STEM offers was the result of greater reliance on employer sponsorship of postgraduate study (with employers investing in postgraduate study to upskill their workplace being more likely to sponsor courses in the STEM subjects).



HEIs expressed concern that increases in the demand for STEM subjects was occurring at the expense of subjects such as the arts, humanities and languages. One HEI spoke of the potential loss of “passion” postgraduate taught study, undertaken by students with an interest in the subject area, or out of a general desire to learn more, or explore new fields. To some extent this is evidenced by the decline as a proportion of all applications in demand for Social / Political / Economic studies at both PGR and PGT level. The data collected for this study shows less evidence of a negative impact on demand for other Arts or Humanities subjects.

# Chapter 4: Trends in applications by domicile

**This chapter provides information on trends in the profile of applications by the domicile of applications i.e. whether they are from students that are UK domiciled, based in other EU countries or in non-EU countries. Again it looks separately at the subject distribution of PGR and PGT applications. Within this, the chapter also analyses trends by domicile within detailed course type and subject area.**

## 4.1. Caveats on the data

In some cases, HEIs did not have the actual domicile available as a field in their applications databases, and so instead the domicile was derived from nationality. Only a very small proportion of records in this field were blank or unknown (0.8% of PGR records and one per cent of PGT records).

However, as mentioned in the introduction to this report, the role of agents in the processing of applications from potential students based outside the EU means might have some impact on the trends shown in demand for postgraduate study. The use of agents is widespread and most HEIs felt that some filtering of applications was conducted by agents so that not all original submissions would appear in the institution's records. HEIs found it hard to place a figure on the proportion of applications received by an agent that would then be submitted to them – one suggested a figure of around 50%, while others believed that only a very small number would be filtered out. Some qualitative information on the role of agents in postgraduate applications is included at the end of this chapter.

## 4.2. Application rates by Domicile

### 4.2.1. Applications to Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes by Domicile

Figure 4.1 overleaf shows the volumes of PGR applications by domicile.

This figure shows that, following a general upward trend, in 2010/11 there was a drop in the number of PGR applications across all domicile groups. The number of applications from all three groups then recovered slightly in 2011/12 bringing levels of applications back to the levels seen in 2008/9.

Looking at UK domiciled applications particularly, these experienced a 5% decrease in 2010/11 followed by an 8% increase in 2011/12.

**Figure 4.1: PGR Applications by Domicile (absolute numbers)**

Year	UK domiciled	Other EU	Non-EU
<b>2005/06</b>	17,622	23,775	72,067
<b>2006/07</b>	20,672	22,799	85,605
<b>2007/08</b>	24,727	25,703	98,115
<b>2008/09</b>	33,166	32,081	119,201
<b>2009/10</b>	45,054	37,880	136,868
<b>2010/11</b>	42,945	26,530	108,636
<b>2011/12</b>	46,567	29,313	119,275

Base: All applications to PGR programmes where domicile is known (182,422)

(05/06: 5,269), (06/07: 6,543), (07/08: 7,592), (08/09: 25,507), (09/10: 30,243), (10/11: 51,015), (11/12: 56,253)

Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

Applications submitted by non-EU candidates made up the majority of applications to PGR programmes in each of the years covered by the research, demonstrating the reliance of the UK postgraduate sector on the international market. Across the seven years, just less than two thirds (64%) of applications were submitted by non-EU candidates, peaking in 2006/7 and 2007/8. On average, 19% were submitted by UK domiciled candidates and 17% from other EU applicants.

Since 2006/7, Table 4.1 overleaf indicates that there has been a modest decline in the proportion of submissions from both other EU and non-EU candidates across the seven years, contrasted against a more pronounced increase in the proportion of applications from UK domiciled candidates (increasing from 16% to 24% in 2011/12). As discussed in section 4.2.2, an inverse trend can be identified for PGT UK-domiciled submissions.

**Table 4.1: Proportion of PGR Applications by Domicile**

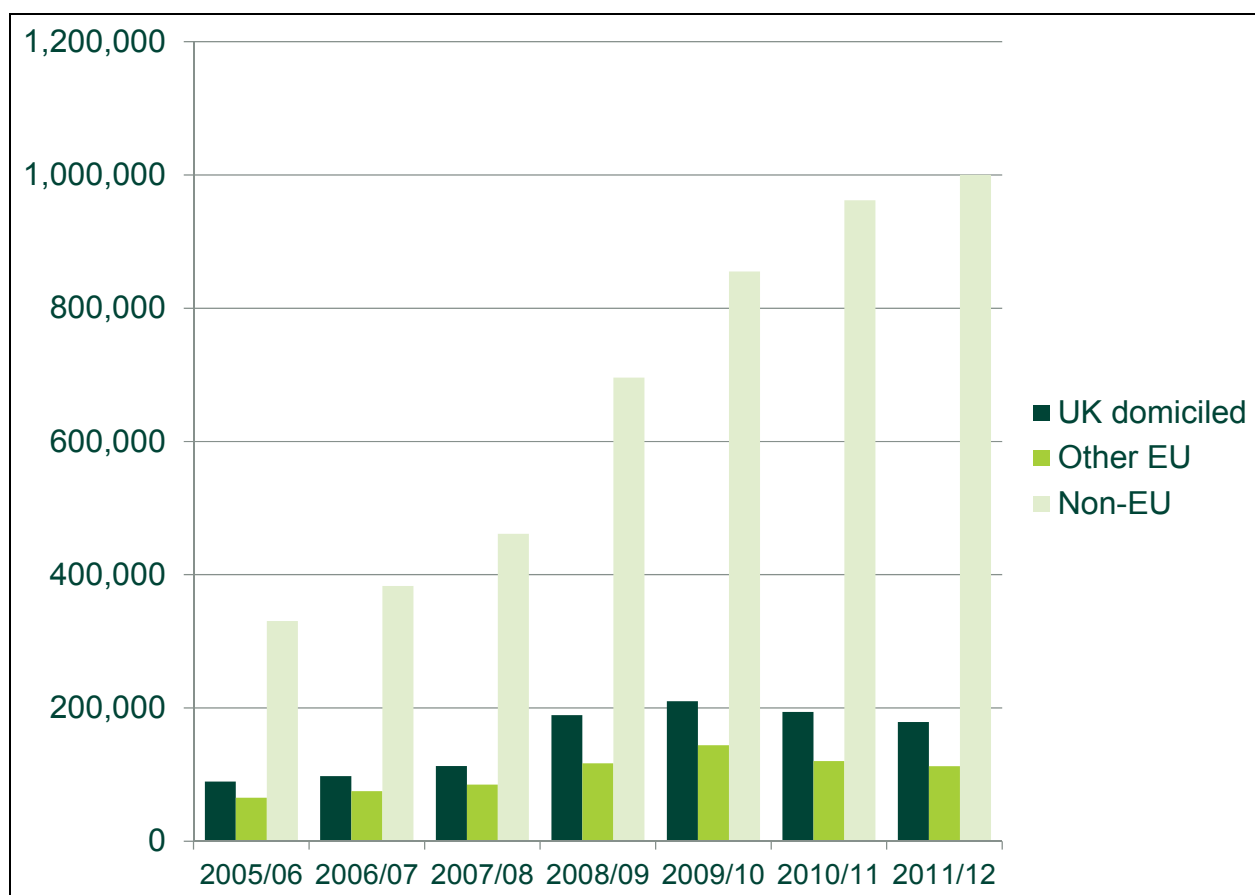
Year	UK domiciled	Other EU	Non-EU
<b>2005/06</b>	16%	21%	64%
<b>2006/07</b>	16%	18%	66%
<b>2007/08</b>	17%	17%	66%
<b>2008/09</b>	18%	17%	65%
<b>2009/10</b>	20%	17%	62%
<b>2010/11</b>	24%	15%	61%
<b>2011/12</b>	24%	15%	61%

#### 4.2.2. Applications to Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes by Domicile

Figure 4.2 overleaf shows that the numbers of UK domiciled and other EU applications each rose year on year until 2009/10; however, for both groups numbers of applications then fell in 2010/11 and again in 2011/12. The number of applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates decreased by 15% over the two years (with a drop of 8% in both 2010/11 and 2011/12).

Meanwhile, applications submitted by non-EU candidates increased year on year throughout the period, showing that the small amount of overall growth for PGT applications in 2010/11 (see Table 2.1) was driven entirely by continued growth in non-EU applications, and masked a fall in applications from the other two domiciles.

**Figure 4.2: PGT Applications by Domicile (absolute numbers)**



Year	UK domiciled	Other EU	Non-EU
<b>2005/06</b>	89,489	65,219	330,410
<b>2006/07</b>	97,566	75,072	382,881
<b>2007/08</b>	112,848	85,038	461,182
<b>2008/09</b>	189,194	117,039	696,116
<b>2009/10</b>	210,068	143,960	855,078
<b>2010/11</b>	194,090	120,119	962,042
<b>2011/12</b>	178,693	112,604	1,000,515

Base: All applications to PGT programmes where domicile is known (924,289)  
 (05/06: 42,991), (06/07: 49,977), (07/08: 58,694), (08/09: 124,918), (09/10: 148,423), (10/11: 248,296), (11/12: 250,990)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

Applications submitted by non-EU candidates represented the largest proportion of applications in each year and accounted for an even greater proportion of all applications

than was the case for PGR study. As an average across the seven year period, applications submitted by non-EU students accounted for 71% of all PGT applications. Moreover, the proportion of applications received from non-EU candidates has increased rapidly in the last few years, peaking in 2011/12 when non-EU submissions constituted over three quarters of all applications (77%).

In contrast to UK PGR applications, PGT submissions from UK domiciled students decreased year on year since 2008/09 when the proportion of UK domiciled applications peaked at 19%. In the most recent academic year, only 14% of applications were submitted by UK domiciled candidates.

There was also a general decline in the proportion of applications submitted by other EU candidates over the period, with the most notable drop occurring between 2009/10 (12%) and 2010/11 (9%). A two percentage point drop was also evident for PGR applications between these two years.

**Table 4.2: Proportion of PGT Applications by Domicile**

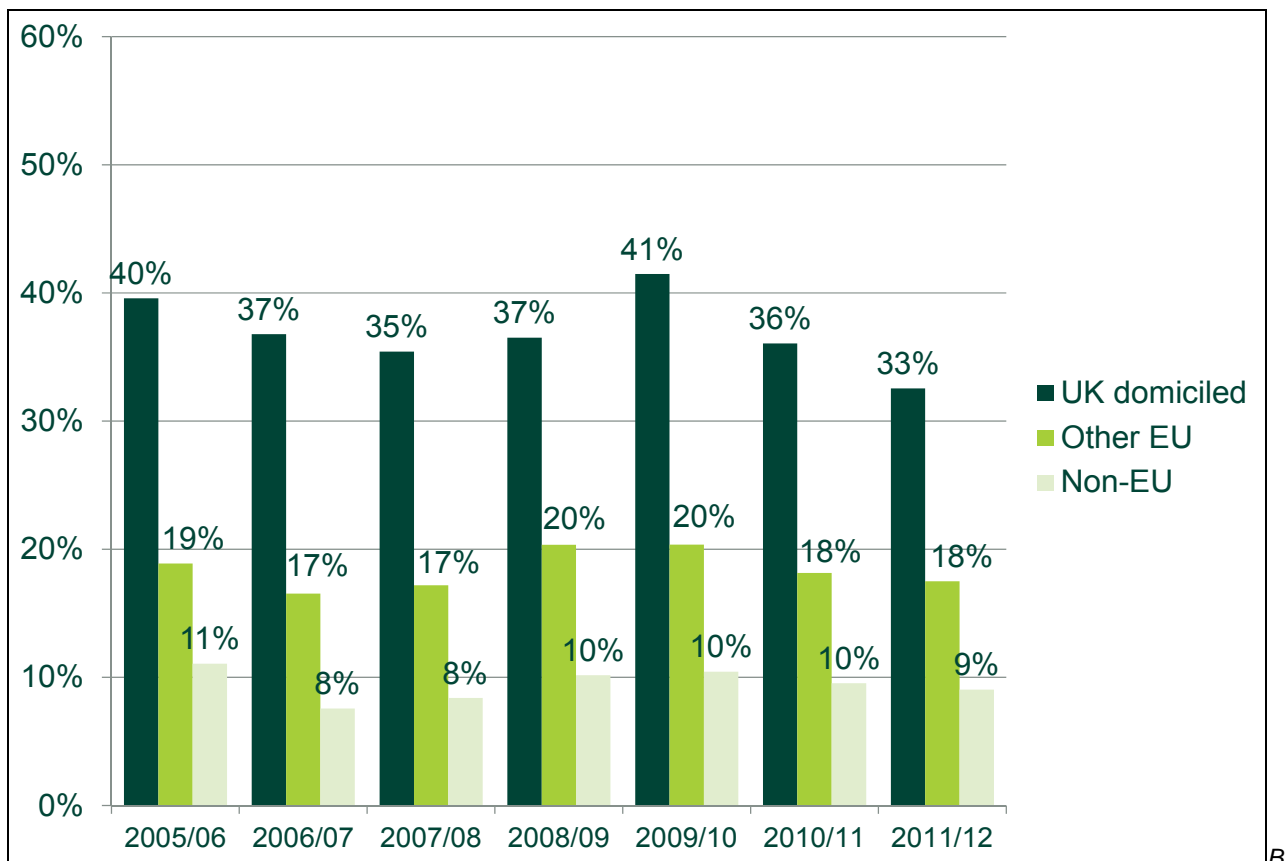
Year	UK domiciled	Other EU	Non-EU
2005/06	18%	13%	68%
2006/07	18%	14%	69%
2007/08	17%	13%	70%
2008/09	19%	12%	69%
2009/10	17%	12%	71%
2010/11	15%	9%	75%
2011/12	14%	9%	77%

### 4.3. Ratio of application numbers to places taken up by domicile

#### 4.3.1. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Programmes

Figure 4.3 below indicates that the ratio of applications to places taken up varies by domicile indicating that the postgraduate population does not entirely reflect the profile of applications.

**Figure 4.3: Percentage of Applications to PGR Programmes Leading to Enrolment According to Domicile**



Base: All applications to PGR programmes where enrolment status is yes/no (167,681)  
 (05/06: 5,269), (06/07: 6,543), (07/08: 7,592), (08/09:25,507), (09/10: 30,243), (10/11:44,223), (11/12: 48,304)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

In all 7 years, although applications for PGR programmes were most likely to be submitted by non-EU candidates, applications from this group were the least likely to lead to enrolment. On average, just 9% of non-EU applications led to a registration, the same proportion as in the most recent academic year; in 2005/6 the highest proportion of applications resulted in an enrolment, at 11%.

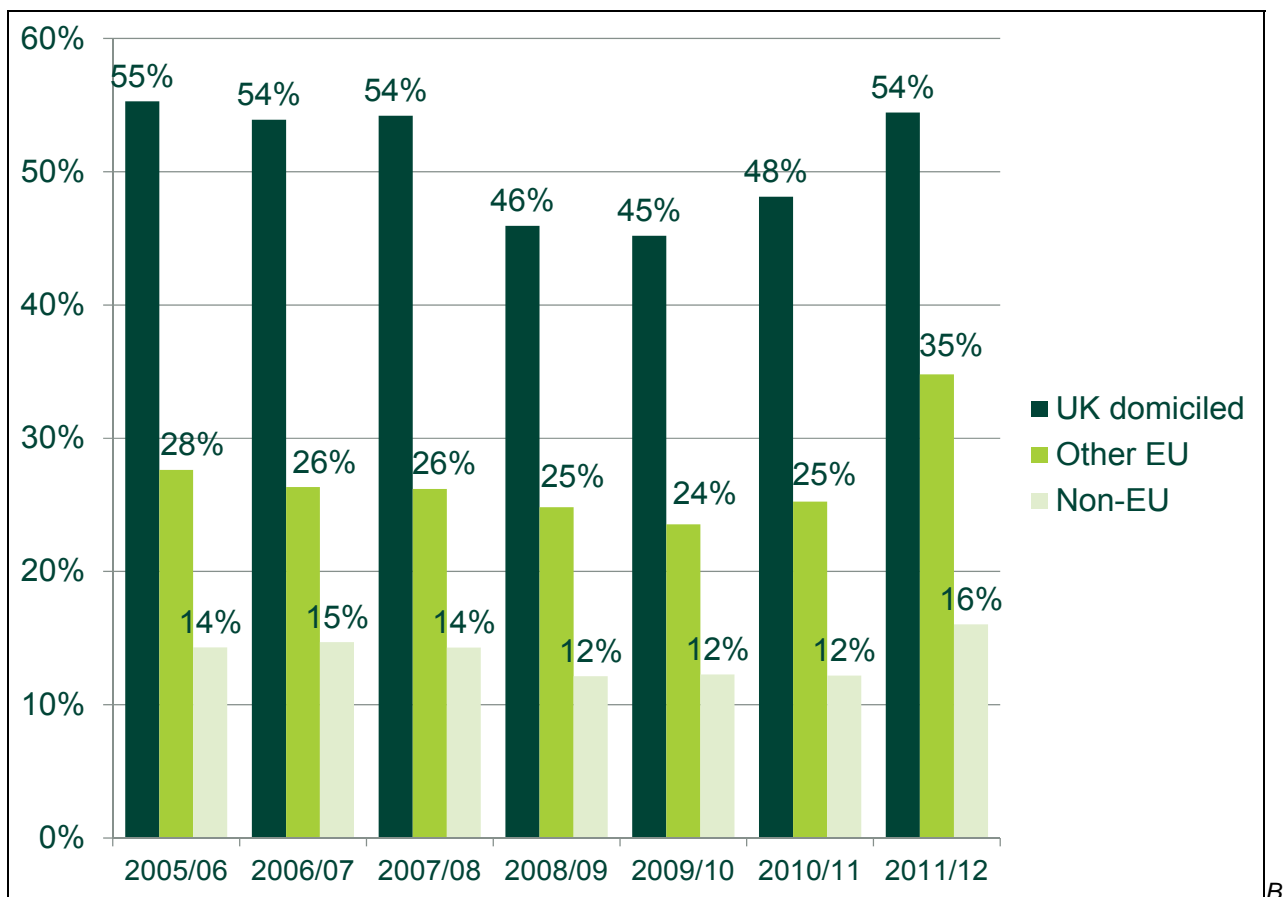
Applications submitted by UK domiciled students are considerably more likely to result in a registration; 37% of applications resulted in enrolment. There was some fluctuation year on year however; at most 41% of applications led to registration (2009/10) but only a third (33%) of applications submitted in 2011/12 did so.

As an average across the period, a fifth (18%) of applications submitted by other EU candidates resulted in enrolment. This was relatively consistent across the period, at least 17% of applications led to registration and 20% at most.

#### 4.3.2. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) Programmes

Figure 4.4 below shows the same analysis of the proportion of applications that result in places taken up by domicile for PGT programmes

**Figure 4.4: Percentage of Applications to PGT Programmes Leading to Enrolment According to Domicile**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes where enrolment status is yes/no (855,909)  
 (05/06: 42,991), (06/07:49,997), (07/08: 58,694), (08/09:124,264), (09/10:147,431), (10/11:215,498), (11/12:217,034)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

As with PGR applications, submissions to PGT programmes submitted by UK domiciled applicants were much more likely to lead to enrolment than those submitted by other EU or non-EU applicants. On average, 51% of PGT applications submitted by Home candidates between 2005/06 and 2011/12 resulted in enrolment; in comparison with 27% of other EU applications and 14% of non-EU submissions.

In contrast to PGR trends, in the three most recent academic years there has been a notable increase in the proportion of enrolments made by UK domiciled students, rising from 45% in 2009/10 to 54% in 2011/12. This increase had been preceded by a sharp decline in the proportion of enrolments made between 2007/8 and 2008/09 when the percentage of registrations dropped from 54% to 46%.



However, an even more dramatic increase was evidenced for other EU applications between 2010/11 and 2011/12. In the space of a single academic year, the percentage of other EU applications resulting in enrolment increased from a quarter (25%) to over a third (35%). In comparison, at PGR level, the proportion of other EU enrolments had remained consistent during these two academic years (18% respectively).

A smaller increase in the conversion rate of non-EU PGT enrolments was evidenced in the two most recent academic years; in 2010/11 12% of applications resulted in registration, in 2011/12 this has increased to 16%.

### 4.3.3. Trends in PGR Applications by Domicile by Course Type

Table 4.3 provides a breakdown by domicile of the proportion of applications submitted to each PGR qualification.

**Table 4.3: Proportion of PGR Applications by Domicile by Course Type**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10		17	
	<i>Base: All applications</i>	5,269	6,543	7,592	25,507	30,243	51,015	56,253
<b>All</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	80%	83%	86%	87%	86%	88%	86%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	19%	15%	13%	11%	11%	10%	10%
<b>UK domiciled</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	88%	87%	90%	87%	84%	86%	83%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	6%	6%	5%	6%	9%	7%	9%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	7%	7%	5%	7%	7%	7%	8%
<b>Other EU</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	70%	75%	78%	82%	83%	85%	84%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	29%	25%	22%	17%	16%	14%	14%
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	81%	85%	87%	88%	88%	89%	88%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	19%	14%	12%	10%	11%	9%	10%

As reported earlier in Chapter 2, there was a 9% decrease in applications to Research Masters programmes submitted between 2005/6 and 2011/12. It is evident from Table 4.1 above that this decrease has been driven by the proportionate decline in applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates who submit the bulk (64%) of all PGR applications). Moreover, proportionately fewer other EU candidates were submitting applications to Research Masters however applications numbers are comparatively small.

Furthermore, the increase in applications to PhDs is also predominantly the result of the increase in the proportion of applications submitted by non-EUI students to this qualification type (rising from 81% to 88% across the period). Combined with the proportionate increase in applications from other EU students, this offsets the decrease in Home applications to PhDs.

#### 4.3.4. Trends in PGT Applications by Domicile by Course Type

Figure 4.4 below shows a breakdown in PGT qualifications applied for by domicile.

**Table 4.4: Proportion of PGT Applications by Domicile by Course Type**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
	<i>Base: All applications</i>	42,991	49,977	58,694	124,918	148,423	248,296	250,990
<b>All</b>	<b>Masters degrees</b>	91%	91%	90%	91%	92%	93%	93%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%
	<b>Postgraduate certs and diplomas</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%
<b>UK domiciled</b>	<b>Masters degrees</b>	73%	75%	74%	85%	83%	79%	74%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	6%	6%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Postgraduate certs and diplomas</b>	21%	19%	21%	13%	15%	19%	24%

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Other EU	<b>Masters degrees</b>	98%	98%	97%	95%	96%	95%	94%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Postgraduate certs and diplomas</b>	2%	2%	1%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Non-EU	<b>Masters degrees</b>	95%	93%	93%	93%	94%	96%	96%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%
	<b>Postgraduate certs and diplomas</b>	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

The vast majority of applications submitted by all PGT candidates were for intended study on Masters courses. Expressed as a proportion of total applications, the highest percentage of applications submitted to Masters courses were made by other EU students constituting 96% of applications submitted across the period. This was followed closely by Non-EU students; 94% of applications submitted by Non-EU students were for intended study on Masters degree programmes. Approximately eight in ten applications (78%) submitted by UK domiciled candidates were for proposed study on Masters programmes; a high but noticeably lower proportion than foreign students.

Moreover, whilst the proportion of other EU and non-EU applications to Masters courses remained relatively consistent across the period, there was some oscillation evident in the proportion of applications submitted by UK domiciled students between years. The highest proportions of UK domiciled applications were submitted in 2008/9 when Masters applications represented 85% of all submissions, however by 2011/12 this had declined to 74%.

UK domiciled candidates were however significantly more likely to submit applications to study towards postgraduate certificates and diplomas, representing just less than a fifth (19%) of UK domiciled applications across the period. Comparatively just 3% of other EU and 2% of non-EU applications were for study on such courses. Again, there is some evidence of fluctuation; in 2008/9 when the proportion of UK domiciled submissions to Masters programmes was at its peak, applications towards postgraduate certificates and

diplomas were at the lowest (13%). Yet, by 2011/12, they represented a quarter of applications (24%).

#### 4.3.5. Trends in PGR Applications by Domicile By Subject

Table 4.5 below shows proportions of PGR applications for each subject area split by domicile.

**Table 4.5: Proportion of PGR Applications split by Subject Area within Domicile**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		6		10		17		
<i>Base: All applications</i>		5,269	6,543	7,592	25,507	30,243	51,015	56,253
UK domiciled	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	2%	2%	3%	6%	8%	6%	6%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1%	<1%	<1%	5%	7%	7%	9%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	9%	15%	16%	9%	10%	15%	16%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%
	<b>Physics</b>	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4%	6%	6%	4%	4%	8%	7%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	13%	13%	13%	11%	10%	10%	8%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	30%	25%	24%	19%	17%	13%	13%
	<b>Law</b>	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	6%	7%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%
<b>Languages</b>	3%	4%	5%	7%	7%	5%	6%	

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Humanities</b>	8%	6%	7%	8%	10%	9%	8%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
	<b>Education</b>	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	1%	<1%	-	5%	5%	3%	3%
<b>Other EU</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	<1%	-	<1%	1%	2%	3%	4%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2%	5%	6%	4%	5%	7%	9%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	-	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Physics</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	4%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%	8%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	61%	57%	56%	44%	42%	37%	35%
	<b>Law</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	3%	4%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	8%	10%	10%	11%	10%	10%	7%
	<b>Languages</b>	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	4%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	5%	4%	4%	5%	7%	6%	6%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Education</b>	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	-	-	5%	6%	4%	4%
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	3%	4%	5%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	4%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Physics</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	11%	13%	13%	13%	14%	15%	16%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	49%	40%	39%	29%	29%	25%	24%
	<b>Law</b>	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	11%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
	<b>Languages</b>	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Education</b>	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	7%	6%	4%	4%	

Applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates tended to be spread more evenly across a broader range of subjects, whereas applications submitted by other EU and non-EU candidates tended to be more strongly focused on a particular subject area.

Namely, over the seven year period, on average 47% of other EU applications and 33% of non-EU applications were intended for study on Social / Political / Economic programmes. Comparatively among UK domiciled applications, submissions to the same subject area represented 20% of applications (making it the most popular subject area amongst UK domiciled students also). Despite its prominent popularity, there was a comparatively more diverse spread of submissions made to other subject areas.

As Table 4.5 indicates, it is apparent that the decline in applications submitted to Social / Political / Economic studies is evidenced in a reduced number of submissions made by applicants based in all three domiciles. Over the 7 year period, in each group of candidates, the proportion of applications to this area has approximately halved.

As described in Chapter 3, across all three domiciles, the second highest proportion of PGR applications were submitted to Engineering / Technology / Building / Architecture courses accounting for 12% of all applications submitted across the period. Proportionately, non-EU candidates submitted the most applications to this area on average representing 14% of all non-EU applications. Table 4.5 indicates that recently this proportion had increased; 16% of International applications were for intended study on such programmes in 2011/12 in comparison with 11% in 2005/6. Conversely, the proportion of UK domiciled applications has recently decreased; in 2011/12 only 8% of applications were submitted to Engineering / Technology / Building / Architecture courses in comparison with 13% in 2005/6.

Table 4.5 also indicates that the increase in applications to Biological Sciences is evidenced across applications submitted by candidates from all three domicile groups.

Overall, applications to Business and Administrative studies comprise the third largest proportion of PGR submissions, accounting for 11% per cent of applications submitted across the period. Table 4.3 indicates that this area is considerably more popular amongst non-EU candidates; on average 13% of applications were made to this area, in comparison with 9% of other EU submissions and 5% of Home applications.



### 4.3.6. Trends in PGT Applications by Domicile By Subject

Table 4.6 shows proportions of PGT applications for each subject area split by domicile.

**Table 4.6: Proportion of PGT Applications split by Subject Area within Domicile**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		7		13			20	
<i>Base: All applications</i>		42,991	49,977	58,694	124,918	148,243	248,296	250,990
UK domiciled	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	8%	10%	5%	7%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	6%	4%	6%	12%	14%	12%	16%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	6%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	-	-	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	5%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	8%	9%	9%	8%	6%	7%	6%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	21%	19%	17%	17%	15%	19%	17%
	<b>Law</b>	8%	6%	6%	7%	7%	6%	5%
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	24%	26%	27%	14%	13%	13%	14%	

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Languages</b>	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Humanities</b>	6%	7%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%
	<b>Education</b>	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%	9%	8%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	-	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Other EU</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	2%	2%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1%	<1%	1%	4%	5%	4%	4%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	-	-	<1%	-	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	11%	12%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	35%	35%	30%	23%	22%	22%	23%
	<b>Law</b>	8%	8%	8%	15%	13%	9%	10%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	23%	25%	30%	24%	25%	24%	24%

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Languages</b>	2%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Education</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	-	-	1%	1%	2%	2%
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	11%	12%	12%	14%	13%	13%	13%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	25%	23%	20%	13%	13%	16%	15%
	<b>Law</b>	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%	4%	4%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	34%	35%	37%	37%	39%	39%	41%

	Year						
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Languages</b>	1%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Humanities</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Education</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	-	<1%	1%	2%	2%	2%

Aforementioned in Chapter 3, across the seven year period, submissions to Business / Administrative studies accounted for the largest single proportion of PGT applications representing approximately a third (33%) of all applications. This subject area is the most popular across all three domiciles, but notably so amongst non-EU candidates. On average, across the seven year period 38% of applications were for intended study in this area. Comparatively, one quarter (25%) of all other EU applications were to this subject area alongside 19% of UK domiciled applications.

Table 4.6 indicates that whilst non-EU applications to Business / Administrative studies have generally increased year on year (peaking in the most recent academic year, comprising 41% of submissions), proportionately UK domiciled applications have decreased over the course of the period and dramatically so between 2007/8 and 2008/9 (from 27% to 14%). Despite this, as explored in Chapter 2, at an overall level the proportion of PGT applications has remained relatively consistent throughout the period, increasing slightly in recent years. This serves as a nod to the sheer volume of non-EU applications received and the ensuring influence they bear on overall trends.

Also as discussed Chapter 3, the second most popular subject area overall was Social / Political / Economic studies, despite the downward trend in applications across the course of the seven years. Reflecting the trend identified at PGR level, there was a decline in the number of applications submitted by candidates based in all three domiciles across the period, albeit it was less pronounced for UK domiciled applicants.

Table 4.6 indicates that there has been considerable growth in the proportion of PGT applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates for both Medicine and Dentistry and Subjects allied to medicine (this growth was not really evident among other EU and non-EU applications). In 2011/12 16% of PGT applications from UK domiciled students were for subjects allied to medicine (making it the second largest recipient of applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates). It is probable that this increase may be connected to the increase in applications that has been reported by HEIs for NHS postgraduate CPD programmes.

As previously discussed 12% of applications submitted across the period were to Engineering / Technology / Building / Architectural courses and a slight overall increase in the proportion of applications submitted between 2005/6 and 2011/12 is apparent. This increase is again driven by the proportionate increase in applications received from non-EU and other EU students; Table 4.6 reveals a decline in UK domiciled applications.

#### **4.4. Qualitative findings from HEIs discussions regarding use of overseas agents**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, many of the institutions who shared their application data make use of agents to attract and process applications for postgraduate study from some countries.

One of the key benefits that HEIs see in using agents is that it gives them the opportunity to cover far larger areas, and a greater number of areas, when recruiting students. The local contacts and knowledge of agents was described as being extremely valuable. They are particularly able to help in countries where individuals are generally not well informed about education opportunities, and may have limited resources to research options (for example in countries where home internet access is not commonplace). Agents are also seen as essential in countries where travel is very difficult.

The number of agents that are used, their geographical spread, and the proportion of applications they account for varies from HEI to HEI. Use of agents also differs according to the overseas territory, with use of agents being very popular in some areas, and unheard of in others. Two HEIs cited the USA as an example of a country where agents are not used. Others stated that use of agents was less common in markets such as Hong Kong and Singapore, where students tend to be very well informed about their educational opportunities, and are often more equipped to do their own research and applications.

In most cases, the HEIs seem to have a rolling contract with each agency, that can be renewed or cancelled depending on performance. Some HEIs seem to have a closer relationship than others with their agents – in these cases terms such as ‘partner’ and ‘representative’ were used often, rather than ‘agent.’

Most HEIs indicated that they are very selective about which agents to use, and employ tight monitoring procedures; several mentioned ending contracts with agents who were not seen to be performing adequately. In most cases, agents seem to work closely with the universities’ International Officers and regional offices, helping to ensure the quality of the agents’ work, and that the HEI is being properly represented to potential students. Two HEIs had specific website interfaces or portals for use by their official agents (as a way of filtering out any unofficial agent approaches).

##### **4.4.1. What do agents do?**

A key role of agents appears to be in guiding and informing the candidates in their choice of HEI, as well as assisting with the actual application process; agents often represent multiple HEIs (sometimes from multiple countries) and so can advise applicants on the most suitable place for them to go. It was noted that agents tend to be more involved with applications for PGT courses than with PGR study.

HEIs reported that agents often offer candidates help with filling out the application forms. One HEI mentioned instances of agents filling in forms entirely for candidates; it is believed that some candidates (or their families) feel that the candidate will have a better chance of success if the application is written by 'a professional.'

HEIs felt that agents can perform a valuable role in checking that forms are correctly filled in and that candidates have the correct documentation, prior to submitting the application to an HEI. A number of institutions also mentioned that their agents will filter applications for quality (e.g. checking minimum qualifications, or assessing a candidate's likelihood of gaining a visa); this appears to be widely encouraged by HEIs, as it cuts down on unnecessary administration for the central admissions team.

#### 4.4.2. How are agents paid?

The majority of agents are paid commission on the successful enrolment of a student. However, one HEI also mentioned offering other performance related bonuses – for example, to reward particularly high volume or high quality applications, or applications for hard-to-reach subject areas.

#### 4.4.3. Impact of agents on applications

It is dependent on individual markets and HEIs as to whether the majority of overseas applications come through an agent or are made direct. Agents can have a particularly crucial effect for HEIs with poor international name recognition – students themselves might not think of going there, but an agent can advise them, recommend that HEI, and tell them about the sort of experience they can hope to get there. For HEIs with higher name or brand recognition, agents were felt to have less of an impact on applications; and those HEIs with the very highest level of name and brand recognition tended not to use agents at all.

Among the different HEIs who shared their data for this exercise, there was variety in the proportion of their non-EU applications that they felt came through agents – figures given ranged from approximately 25% to 75% of applications being submitted via an agent. The most common proportion given was around 50%. However institutions were often unsure of the exact figures.

Some HEIs mentioned activities that they had undertaken to try to encourage agents to place more applications with their institution. These included arranging training sessions for agents in order to improve their knowledge of the HEI and the types of applications they are looking for. Some HEIs had also arranged agent events, such as inviting groups of top agents to visit the university campus in the UK, thus helping to build the relationship between the HEI and their agent, as well as giving the agents first-hand experience of the institution to report back to potential overseas students – and potentially an extra incentive to continue to send students there.

Some HEIs mentioned that they were currently reviewing their use of agents and that they might look to reduce this in the future (to avoid the costs of paying commission).

# Chapter 5: Trends in applications by Previous HE experience

This chapter explores the proportions of applicants that applied to a postgraduate course at their existing (or former) HE provider.

## 5.1. Caveats and limitations of the data

A small number of institutions were unable to provide data to indicate whether applications were made by alumni. One specialist postgraduate provider did not log this information as they do not offer undergraduate courses. Four other HEIs were unable to provide this information as their undergraduate and postgraduate databases weren't linked. For the purposes of this analysis, these institutions have been entirely excluded from the analysis in this chapter. As this then means that the base sizes for the period 2005/06 to 2007/08 are too small (figures would be based on four HEIs for PGT, and just three HEIs for PGR), only data from 2008/09 onwards has been presented.

The majority of HEIs were only able to identify whether an application came from an individual who had previously studied at the institution *at any point* in the past. As such, where data indicates that an applicants were "alumni", this should be understood as an indication that the applicant was *either* currently studying at the organisation or crucially, had done so in the past. That is, the data does not relate only to students progressing straight from undergraduate study to postgraduate study at the same institution.

## 5.2. Proportions of applications submitted by alumni

### 5.2.1. Proportion of applications submitted to PGR by alumni

As an average across the four year period, 15% of PGR applications were made by applicants wishing to study at their current / previous HE provider.

Table 5.1 below indicates a relatively consistent trend in the proportion of applications received from alumni over the course of the four years, with alumni representing between 13.6% and 16.2% of total submissions.

The proportion of applications made by alumni declined very slightly year on year from 16.2% in 2008/09 down to 13.6% of applications in 2011/12.

**Table 5.1: Percentage of applications received from alumni by year (PGR)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Percentage of alumni applying to PGR study at same institution
2008/09	6	20,754	16.2%
2009/10		23,652	15.6%
2010/11	12	36,979	14.5%

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Percentage of alumni applying to PGR study at same institution
2011/12		40,530	13.6%

### 5.2.2. Proportion of applications submitted to PGT by alumni

By comparison to PGR applications, a lower proportion of applications for PGT study were accounted for by alumni. Since 2008/09, on average just 5.1% of PGT applications were made by individuals wishing to study at their current or previous HE provider. This lower proportion could be due to the fact that choice of taught postgraduate courses is less dependent upon existing relationships with tutors than is often the case for research courses.

As Table 5.2 below shows, this proportion remained relatively consistent over the first two of the years covered in this section (at around 6%). As was the case for PGR applications, this proportion then decreased from 2010/11 onwards. In 2011/12 applications from alumni represented just 4.2% of total applications.

**Table 5.2: Percentage of applications received from alumni by year (PGT)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Percentage of alumni applying to PGT at same institution
2008/09	9	99,516	6.0%
2009/10		114,557	5.7%
2010/11	15	179,429	4.8%
2011/12		181,459	4.2%



### 5.3. Proportions of applications submitted by alumni by mission group

Due to insufficient base sizes, it would not be possible to analyse applications split by each of the individual mission groups; therefore, this section will instead examine the proportion of applications submitted by alumni of Russell Group institutions, against the proportion submitted by alumni of institutions with other or no mission groups.

Additionally, due to the exclusion of five HEIs from this section, data prior to 2010/11 has been excluded, due to insufficient base sizes in each of the groups for those years.

#### 5.3.1. Proportion of applications submitted by alumni to PGR courses by mission group

As shown in Table 5.3 below, in each of the two years a higher proportion of applications received for PGR courses at Russell Group institutions were submitted by alumni, with an average of 15%, compared with applications received at non-Russell Group institutions, where the average was 10%. This difference could perhaps be attributed to the greater research focus of Russell Group universities, meaning that students of Russell Group HEIs wishing to undertake a postgraduate research qualification might be more likely to submit an application to their current or previous HEI than students of non-Russell Group institutions.

The levels in each of the years are very consistent for both groups, with the proportion of applications submitted by alumni dropping by 1% for each in 2011/12.

**Table 5.3: Percentage of PGR applications submitted alumni by mission group**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Percentage of alumni applying to Russell Group HEIs	Percentage of alumni applying to HEIs with other / no mission group
2010/11	12	36,979	15%	11%
2011/12		40,530	14%	10%

#### 5.3.2. Proportion of applications submitted by alumni to PGT courses by mission group

As shown in Table 5.4 overleaf, in direct contrast to the trend for PGR applications, a higher proportion of applications for PGT courses at non-Russell Group HEIs were submitted by alumni (an average of 8%) compared with applications to Russell Group HEIs (an average of 4%).

In line with the PGR figures, the proportions of applications submitted by alumni in each year were very consistent, with a drop of just 1% in 2011/12 for both Russell Group HEIs and HEIs belonging to any other, or no, mission group.

**Table 5.4: Percentage of PGT applications submitted alumni by mission group**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Percentage of alumni applying to Russell Group HEIs	Percentage of alumni applying to HEIs with other / no mission group
2010/11	15	179,429	4%	8%
2011/12		181,459	3%	7%

#### 5.4. Ratios of applications to enrolments by alumni status (PGR)

##### 5.4.1. Ratios of PGR applications to enrolments by alumni status

Table 5.5 indicates that candidates that applied to study PGR programmes at their current (or former) institution were considerably more likely to have enrolled, than applicants with no previous connection to their intended HEI.

**Table 5.5: Ratio of applications to places taken up by alumni status (PGR)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Ratio of PGR applications to enrolments by alumni	Ratio of PGR applications to enrolments by new applicants
2008/09	6	20,754	3.21	8.04
2009/10		23,652	2.86	7.91
2010/11	12	36,979	2.96	8.35
2011/12		40,529	3.10	8.62

As an average ratio across the four year period, one in three applications submitted by alumni resulted in enrolment (3.03:1). In comparison, approximately one in eight applications submitted by new applicants resulted in registration on a PGR course (8.23:1).

Across the period, the ratio of applications submitted by alumni to enrolment has remained consistent, ranging between 2.9:1 and 3.2:1 across the four years.

The ratio of applications to places taken up for students without previous experience of studying at the institution was also fairly consistent over time, ranging from 7.9 applications received to every registration (in 2009/10) to 8.6:1 (in 2011/12).

##### 5.4.2. Ratio of PGT applications to enrolments by alumni status

For PGT programmes, alumni were also significantly more likely enrol than new applicants, although the distinction is less marked than at PGR level as in shown in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Ratio of applications to places taken up by existing student status (PGT)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Ratio of PGT applications to enrolments by alumni	Ratio of PGT applications to enrolments by new applicants
2008/09	9	98,861	1.85	6.05
2009/10		113,565	1.73	6.50
2010/11	15	178,567	1.74	6.55
2011/12		180,221	1.78	4.77

As an average ratio across the four year period, slightly fewer than one in two PGT applications (1.8:1) submitted by alumni resulted in enrolment. In comparison, one in six (5.97:1) applications submitted by new applicants resulted in registration on a PGT course.

As with PGR applications, across the period, the ratio of PGT applications to places taken up among alumni was relatively consistent, ranging from 1.73:1 – 1.85:1 across the four years.

For students without prior experience of studying at the institution, the ratio of applications to enrolments was also relatively consistent. The lowest ratio of PGT applications to enrolments in this group was seen in the most recent application year (2011/12) when 4.77 applications were received to every registration. The highest proportion of PGT applications to enrolments among 'new' students was seen in 2010/11 (6.55:1).

## 5.5. Trends in proportion of applications submitted by alumni by domicile

### 5.5.1. Trends in proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by domicile

Table 5.7 overleaf shows the proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by domicile.

As the table shows, the proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni of the HEI was considerably higher among UK-domiciled students than among those from overseas. Across the four year period, 28% of PGR applications from UK-domiciled students were submitted by alumni, in comparison with 17% of other EU candidates and 10% of non-EU applications.

Reflecting the overall decline in the proportion of PGR applications made by alumni from 2010/11 onwards, a lower proportion of submissions from alumni is evidenced across all three domicile groups (although the decline in non-EU applications began one year earlier in 2009/10). Yet, the most notable decrease is evident amongst UK-domiciled applicants; in 2009/10 one-third of applications were submitted alumni (32%), which then dropped to one-quarter in 2010/11 (26%) and just over one-fifth in 2011/12 (23%).

Amongst other EU and non-EU students, the proportion of applications submitted by alumni remained more consistent.

**Table 5.7: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by domicile (PGR)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	UK Domiciled	Other EU	Non-EU
2008/09	6	20,657	32%	18%	12%
2009/10		23,560	32%	19%	10%
2010/11	12	36,568	26%	16%	10%
2011/12		40,121	23%	16%	10%

### 5.5.2. Trends in proportion of PGT applications submitted by alumni by domicile

Table 5.8 below shows the same analysis for PGT applications.

**Table 5.8: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by domicile (PGT)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	UK Domiciled	Other EU	Non-EU
2008/09	9	98,189	17%	4%	3%
2009/10		113,336	17%	4%	3%
2010/11	15	178,053	18%	4%	2%
2011/12		179,916	15%	3%	2%

Although the proportion of PGT applications made by alumni was much lower than for PGR applications, a significantly higher proportion of applications from UK-domiciled students were submitted by alumni, compared with applications submitted by students from overseas. Across the time period, 17% of applications submitted by UK-domiciled candidates to PGT courses were made by alumni. By comparison, 4% of applications submitted by other EU students were from alumni and 3% of those from non-EU students.

In contrast to the pattern seen among PGR applications, the proportion of applications submitted by alumni across the three domiciles only dropped in 2011/12 for UK-domiciled and other EU applications, and in 2010/11 for non-EU applications. Once again, the biggest drop was among UK-domiciled applications (a fall of three percentage points compared to one percentage point each for other EU and non-EU applications); however, the decrease was less marked than that of PGR applications.

## 5.6. Trends in proportion of applications submitted by alumni by detailed qualification type

### 5.6.1. Trends in proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by detailed qualification type

Table 5.9 below shows the variations in the proportion of PGR applications made by alumni by detailed qualification type.

**Table 5.9: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by course type (PGR)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	PhDs	Professional doctorates	Research Masters
2008/09	6	20,754	16%	9%	16%
2009/10		23,652	15%	10%	18%
2010/11	12	36,977	14%	12%	18%
2011/12		40,529	13%	8%	16%

Across the four year application period as a whole, applications for Research Masters were the most likely to have been made by existing students. Across these four application years, just under one-fifth (17%) of applications to Research Masters were submitted by alumni. In contrast, 15% of applications to PhDs degrees and 10% of applications to Professional Doctorates from alumni.

The proportion of applications for Research Masters from alumni remained relatively consistent across the period, peaking in 2009/10 and 2010/11 when 18% of applications were made by alumni.

Generally speaking, the ratio of applications submitted by existing students to other course types changed more across the period. The proportion of applications submitted for PhD study from alumni decreased by one percentage point each year, falling from 16% in 2008/09 to 13% in 2011/12.

The proportion of applications submitted Professional Doctorate courses that were from alumni fluctuated the most, increasing from 9% in 2008/09 to 12% in 2010/11, before falling back down to 8% in 2011/12.

### 5.6.2. Trends in proportion of PGT applications submitted by alumni by detailed course breakdown

Table 5.10 overleaf shows the proportion of PGT applications made by alumni by detailed course type.

**Table 5.10: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by course type (PGT)**

Application Year	Base: Participating HEIs	Base: Applications	Masters Degrees	MBA's	Postgraduate Diplomas & Certificates
2008/09	9	99,516	6%	2%	16%
2009/10		114,557	5%	2%	18%
2010/11	15	179,429	5%	2%	11%
2011/12		181,459	4%	2%	9%

Overall, as an average across the period, the highest proportion of applications from alumni was seen for postgraduate diplomas and certificates (14% of all applications received). Across the period, applications from alumni accounted for 5% of applications to Masters degrees and 2% of applications to MBAs.

There was a slight decline in the proportion of Masters degree applications submitted by alumni over the four years, falling from 6% in 2008/09 to 4% in 2011/12.

The proportion of MBA applications submitted by alumni remained extremely stable over the four years. By comparison, the proportion of applications submitted by alumni for postgraduate diplomas and certificates showed considerable fluctuation, with a high point of 18% in 2009/10 before halving to 9% in 2011/12.

## 5.7. Trends in proportion of applications submitted by alumni by detailed subject breakdown

### 5.7.1. Trends in proportion of PGR applications submitted by alumni by detailed subject breakdown

Across the four year period as a whole the highest proportion of PGR applications from alumni was seen for Humanities courses, where alumni accounted for one quarter (24%) of PGR applications. Proportionately, the number of alumni applying to study Physics was also comparably high, with alumni constituting one fifth (20%) of applications submitted across the period, closely followed by Languages and Creative arts / design at 19% each. On average, the lowest proportions of applications made by alumni were seen for Other physical sciences (9% of applications) and Business / administrative studies (10%).

Table 5.11 overleaf shows the proportion of PGR applications for each subject area that were from alumni in each application year. This analysis indicates that the general decline in the proportion of applications submitted by alumni from 2008/09 onwards can be evidenced in most subject areas. The biggest declines came in Mathematical sciences, where the proportion fell from 25% in 2008/09 to 14% in 2011/12, followed by Creative arts / design, which dropped from 24% to 15%, and Subjects allied to medicine, which fell from 17% to 9% over the same period.

However, proportions of applications from existing students to Other physical sciences and Business/administrative studies remained at a consistent level over the last three

application years. Furthermore, a few subjects saw a slight increase in the proportion of applications submitted by alumni in 2011/12: Computer science / librarianship / information science, Law and Education.

**Table 5.11: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by subject area (PGR)**

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Number of participating HEIs</i>	6		12	
<i>Base: Number of applications</i>	20,754	23,652	36,979	40,530
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>	12%	18%	15%	14%
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>	17%	16%	11%	9%
<b>Biological sciences</b>	16%	15%	14%	12%
<b>Veterinary sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	13%	18%	16%	12%
<b>Chemistry</b>	17%	15%	17%	14%
<b>Physics</b>	21%	23%	20%	17%
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	10%	9%	9%	9%
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	25%	15%	14%	14%
<b>Computer science / librarianship / information science</b>	13%	10%	8%	12%
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	11%	12%	11%	9%
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	18%	18%	17%	16%
<b>Law</b>	13%	16%	12%	13%
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	11%	9%	10%	10%
<b>Languages</b>	22%	21%	18%	17%
<b>Humanities</b>	25%	25%	24%	23%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	24%	18%	19%	15%
<b>Education</b>	13%	14%	11%	12%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	11%	12%	11%	11%

### 5.7.2. Trends in proportion of PGT applications submitted by alumni by detailed subject breakdown

In terms of PGT applications, across this four year period, the highest proportions of applications that were from alumni were seen for applications to study Education (13% of applications received) and Humanities (11%).

Table 5.12 overleaf shows the proportion of applications submitted by alumni split by subject area in each of the four application years.

Reflecting the situation at an overall level, PGT applications by subject show a greater degree of consistency in the proportion of applications from alumni over time than was the case for PGR applications.

Some subjects show a clear decline in the proportion of applications submitted by alumni over the four years. Subjects allied to medicine, Creative arts / design and Education all decreased by five percentage points between 2008/09 and 2011/12, while Chemistry dropped by 4%, Medicine and dentistry and Biological sciences by 3% each.

The greatest fluctuation was seen in the proportion of applications for Veterinary sciences / agriculture submitted by alumni, which jumped from 5% in 2008/09 to 15% in 2009/10, before falling back to a mid-point of 10% in the two years following. This amount of variation in proportion is probably due to the relatively low numbers of applications to this subject overall.



**Table 5.12: Percentage of applications submitted by alumni by subject area (PGT)**

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: Number of participating HEIs</i>	9		15	
<i>Base: Number of applications</i>	99,516	114,557	179,429	181,459
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>	8%	8%	6%	6%
<b>Subjects allied to medicine</b>	10%	12%	9%	7%
<b>Biological sciences</b>	9%	10%	8%	7%
<b>Veterinary sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	5%	15%	10%	10%
<b>Chemistry</b>	9%	9%	5%	5%
<b>Physics<sup>21</sup></b>			8%	6%
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	5%	4%	5%	3%
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	6%	5%	7%	5%
<b>Computer science / librarianship / information science</b>	4%	3%	2%	3%
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	4%	3%	3%	2%
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	4%	4%	4%	3%
<b>Law</b>	6%	6%	5%	4%
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	5%	4%	3%	3%
<b>Languages</b>	8%	8%	7%	6%
<b>Humanities</b>	11%	11%	12%	11%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	10%	9%	9%	5%
<b>Education</b>	15%	14%	14%	10%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	16%	25%	7%	6%

<sup>21</sup> 2008/09 and 2009/10 figures for Physics have been suppressed due to low base sizes in these years

# Chapter 6: Trends in applications by Demographics

**This chapter provides information on the volume of applications to both PGR and PGT programmes broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and disability status.**

## 6.1. Caveats and limitations of the data

All of the demographic information (and in particular the date of birth, ethnicity and disability status fields) must be treated with a certain amount of caution, due to the fact that this information is generally not checked by institutions until the point at which an applicant enrolls; therefore, for applications that did not lead to an enrolment, the information stored in the applications database reflects whatever was entered by the applicant, without having been checked for accuracy.

For the age category, any dates of birth which indicated an unusually high or low age at the point of application (younger than 16 or older than 100) have been removed from the database. As some institutions only provided applicants' year of birth, some of the ages in the database are approximate only.

Ethnicity data has been analysed for UK-domiciled applications only. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that a relatively large proportion of the data for this field is either unknown or refused (8% of unweighted UK-domiciled records are refused or unknown, with a further 8% being blank in the original databases); institutions indicated that while they will confirm ethnicity data at the point of enrolment, many applicants choose not to state this in the initial application.

When looking at disability status, it must be remembered that this is self-declared and does not necessarily represent the actual proportion of applications submitted by applicants with a disability. The way disability status is asked about also varies significantly between institutions, with some asking a simple yes / no question, and others requesting more detail at the application stage. As with ethnicity, there is a relatively large amount of refused / unknown data at this field (18% of unweighted records are refused or unknown, with a further 4% blank in the original databases).

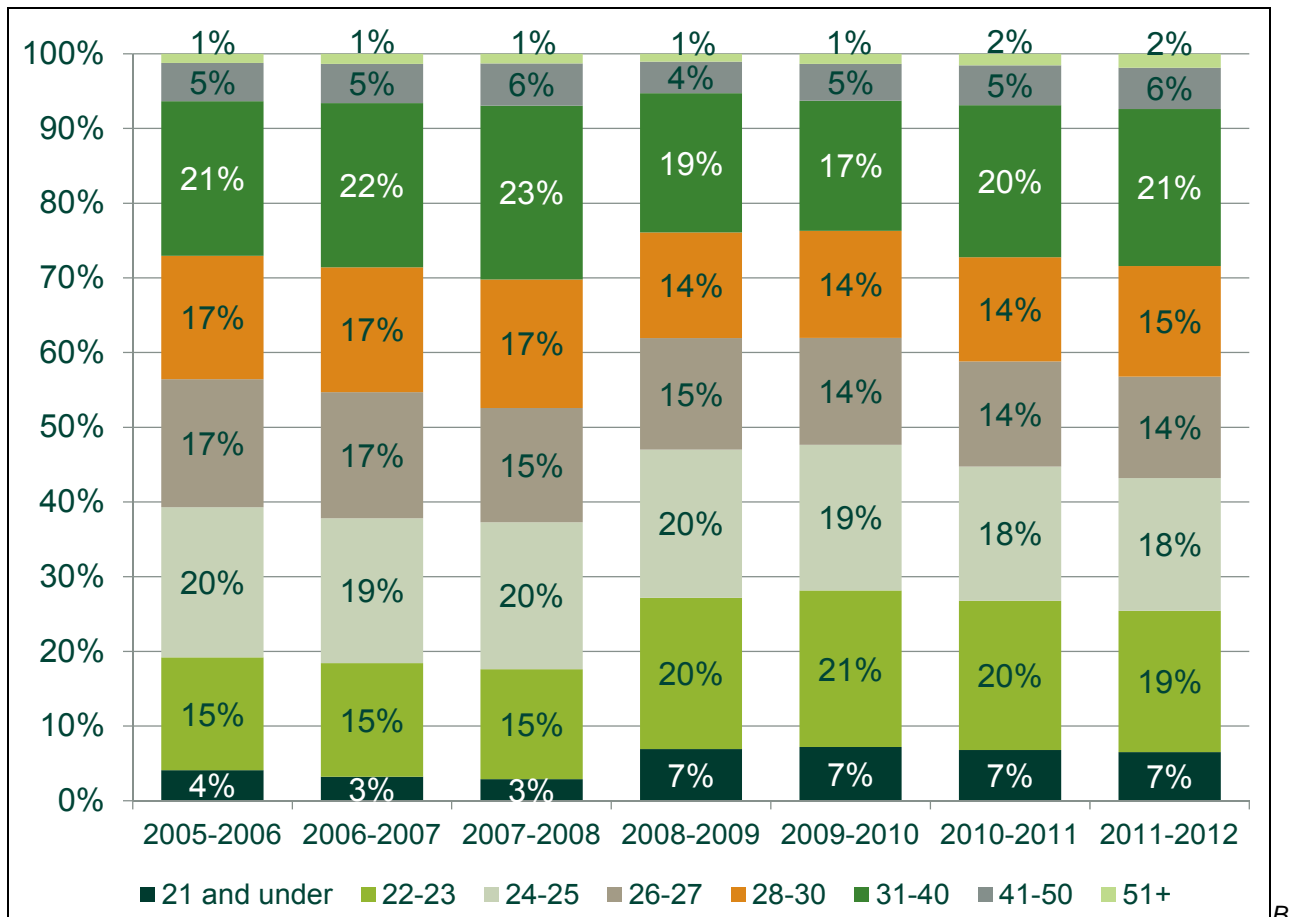
HEIs were originally requested to provide Home applicants' postcode information in order to facilitate analysis by Socio-Economic category. However, too few HEIs were able to provide this information which is typically collated at registration stage and often not held on the same application database. Other HEIs had concerns about data protection issues and were unwilling to provide postcode information. Unfortunately, this entailed that the volume of records available did not warrant a large enough base size on which to conduct robust analysis.

## 6.2. Profile of Applications to Postgraduate Study by Age at Point of Application

### 6.2.1. Applications to PGR Programmes by Age

Figure 6.1 below set outs the age profile of applications to PGR programmes during each of the seven academic years from 2005/06 to 2011/12 inclusive.

**Figure 6.1: Proportion of Applications to PGR programmes by Age**



Base: All applications to PGR programmes with date of birth supplied (183,129)  
 (05/06: 5,240), (06/07: 6,551), (07/08: 7,593), (08/09: 25,541), (09/10: 30,275), (10/11: 51,345), (11/12: 56,584)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

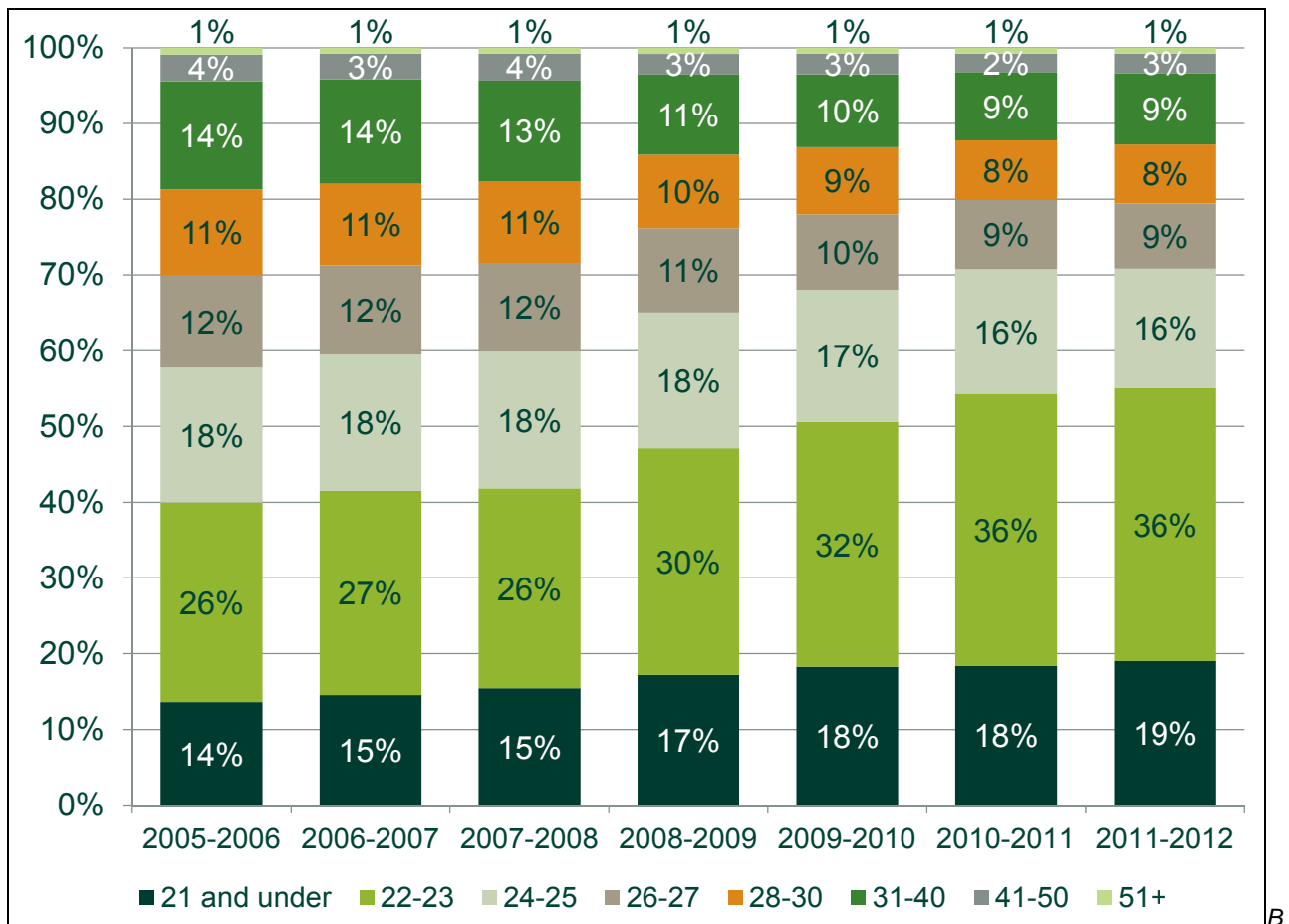
In general terms, the age profile of PGR applications has remained relatively constant over time; there have been some fluctuations over the seven year period but by and large the split between applications from older and younger individuals has remained similar.

Throughout the period covered, between one-fifth (18%) and 28% of applications were submitted by candidates aged 23 or younger. These were likely to be candidates applying to PGR either during or soon after completing their undergraduate degree. In the 2008/09 academic year there was an increase in the proportion of PGR applications submitted by those aged 23 and under, a rise of nine percentage points on the previous year (from 18% to 27%). The proportion of applications submitted by this age group was then broadly consistent in the following three years.

## 6.2.2. Applications to PGT Programmes by Age

Figure 6.2 below shows the age profile of applications to PGT programmes during each of the seven academic years from 2005/06 to 2011/12 inclusive.

**Figure 6.2: Proportion of applications to PGT programmes by age**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes with date of birth supplied (932,285)

(05/06: 43,671), (06/07: 50,639), (07/08: 59,540), (08/09: 126,028), (09/10: 149,783), (10/11: 249,998), (11/12: 252,626)  
HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

As might be expected, compared to PGR applications, a much higher proportion of applications to PGT programmes were submitted by candidates aged 23 and under (an average of 47% throughout the period, with a high of 55% in 2011/12); the majority of these would have been progressing to postgraduate study either directly from or soon after their undergraduate study.

As Figure 6.2 shows, the age profile of applications for PGT study has been getting steadily younger over the period. The proportion of applications submitted by the 23 and under age group increased by 15 percentage points between 2005/06 and 2011/12, driven principally by a rise in applications from the 22-23 age group, which rose by ten percentage points over the seven years compared to five percentage points among those aged 21 and younger. This rise could reflect growing pressure on new graduates to distinguish themselves in an increasingly competitive job market and / or reacting to the lack of job opportunities by remaining in education.

The proportion of applications submitted by all those aged between 24 and 40 has correspondingly decreased throughout the period, with an overall drop of 15 percentage points between 2005/06 and 2011/12. Within this group, the biggest decrease in applications came from the 31-40 age group (a decrease of 6% overall).

In 2011/12 applications from candidates applying either immediately or soon after the completion of their undergraduate studies (aged 23 and under) made up more than half of all applications to taught postgraduate study (55%). The majority of these were aged between 22 and 23 at the point of application (36%). Applications submitted by those aged 51 and over made up the smallest proportion of applications (just 1%) as did those from individuals aged 41-50 (3%). The remainder of applications were divided fairly evenly among the age groups 26-27, 28-30 and 31-40 (making up 9%, 8% and 9% of all applications respectively).

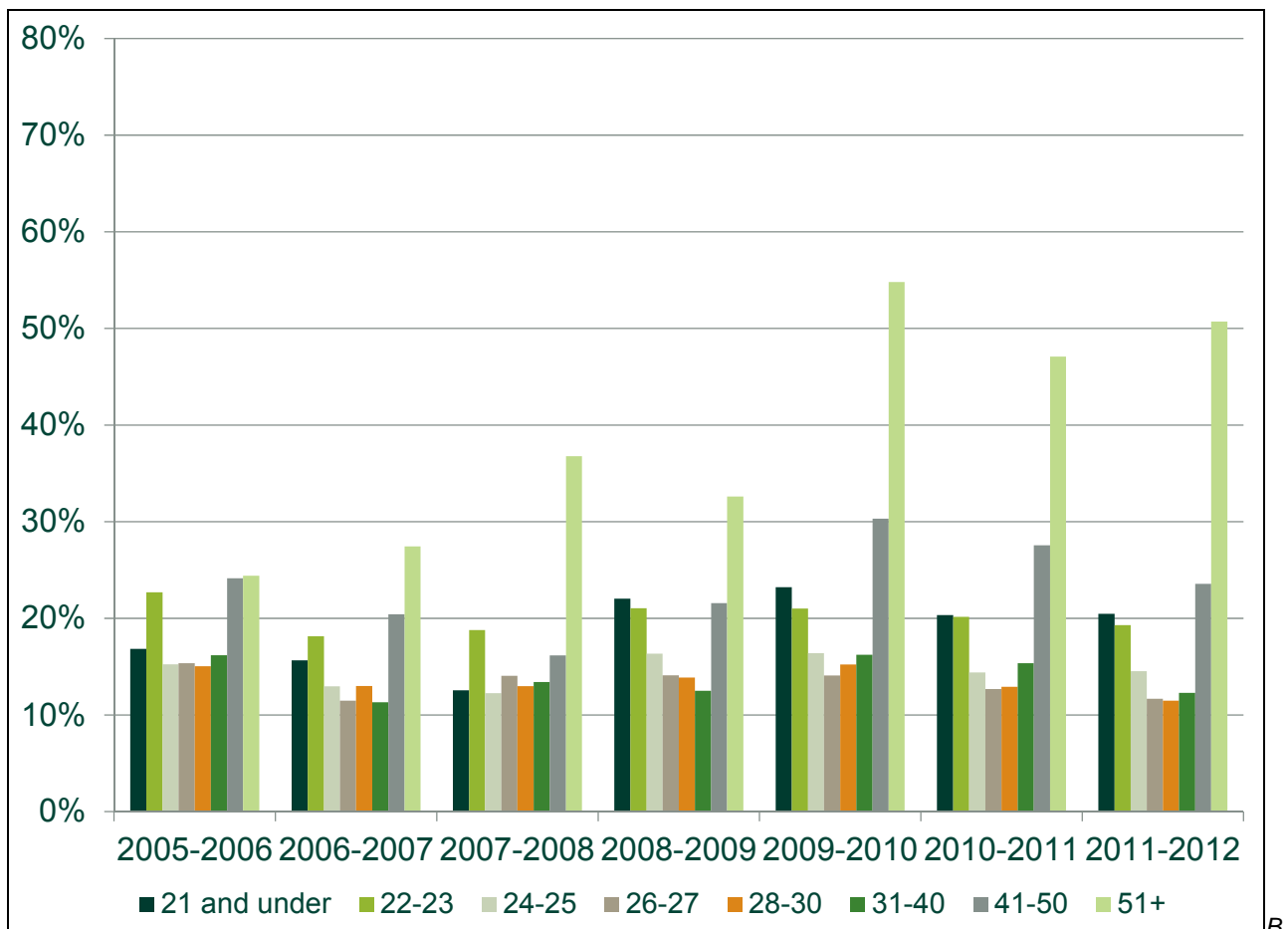
### 6.2.3. Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Age

Figure 6.3 overleaf shows enrolments as a percentage of PGR applications submitted by each age group.

In recent years, applications made by the youngest and oldest age groups have been more likely to result in enrolment than those made by individuals in the middle age brackets.

Applications submitted by candidates in the top two age groups (41-50 and 51 plus) were notably more likely to lead to enrolment in most years; particularly the 50 plus age group, who were most likely to convert an application to an enrolment, with 51% doing so in 2011/12. In 2009/10 more than half (55%) of applications submitted by the 51+ age group resulted in an enrolment, compared with 33% the year before - the most marked increase in enrolments among all age groups. However, even though the proportion of enrolments are high among the this age group, it must be remembered that they make up a relatively low proportion of the overall number of applications (between 1% and 2% each year).

Overall applications submitted by those aged 24-40 were less likely to lead to enrolment; in 2011/12, 15% of applications from 24-25 year olds, 12% of applications from 26-27 and 31-40 year olds, and 11% of applications from 28-30 year olds led to enrolment.

**Figure 6.3: Percentage of PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment**

ase: All applications to PGR programmes with date of birth and enrolment status supplied (168,390)  
 (05/06: 5,240), (06/07: 6,551), (07/08: 7,593), (08/09: 25,541), (09/10: 30,275), (10/11: 44,553), (11/12: 48,637)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

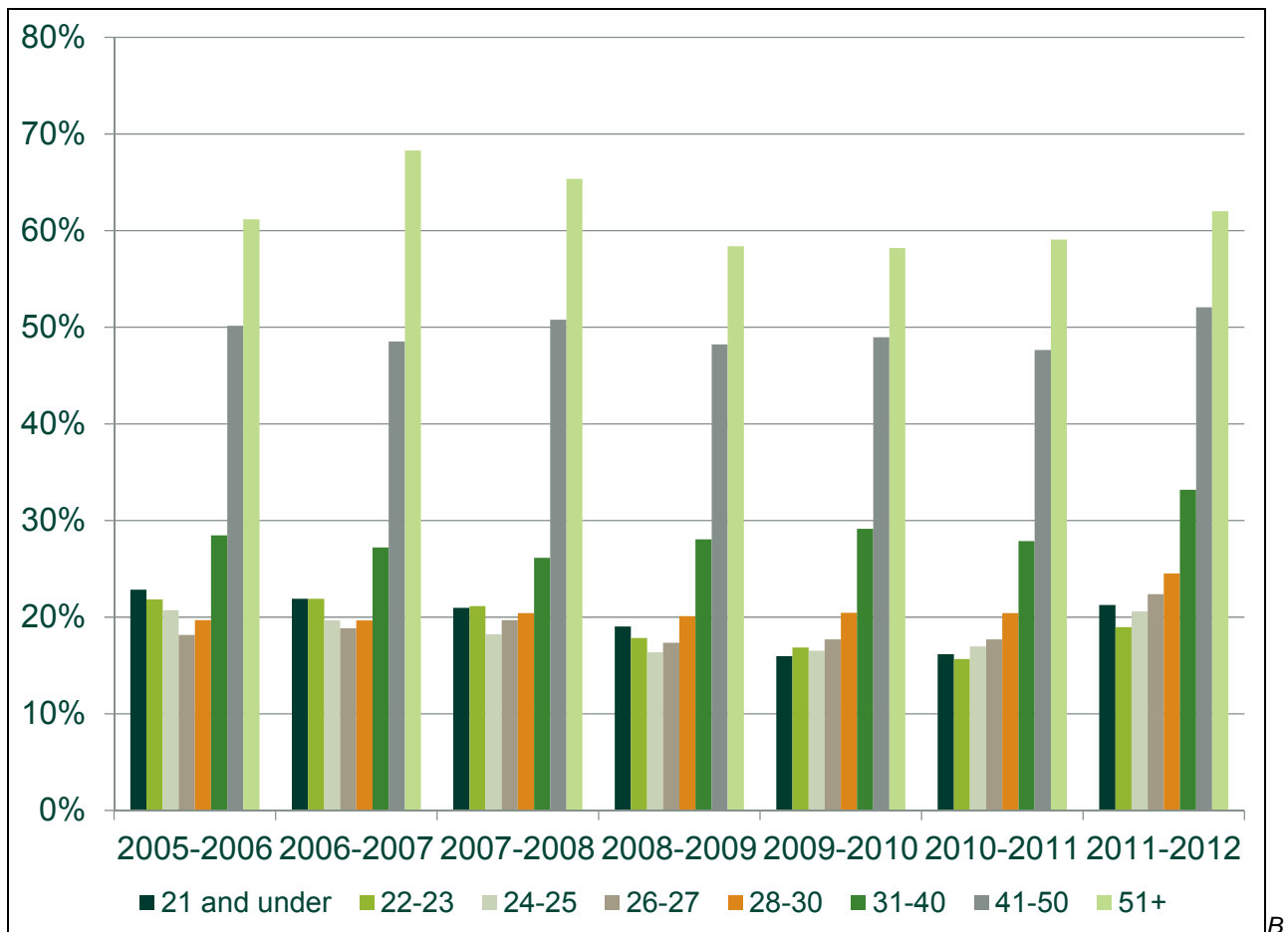
#### 6.2.4. Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Age

Figure 6.4 overleaf shows the same analysis of the proportion of applications resulting in enrolment by age.

As with PGR, applications submitted by candidates aged 41+ were consistently more likely to lead to enrolments. Across all years, applications submitted by those aged 51 and over were roughly three times as likely to lead to enrolment than applications from candidates aged 23 and under. On average 62% of applications from those aged 51 and over resulted in enrolment.

Although in the early part of the period, a similar pattern was seen to that for PGR applications with applications from the youngest applicants more likely to convert into places taken up than those in the middle age bands, this pattern was less marked in recent years. With the exception of the 21 and under group, in 2011/12 the proportion of applications resulting in enrolments generally increased with the age of applicants.

**Figure 6.4: Percentage of PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes with date of birth and enrolment status supplied (863,915)  
 (05/06: 43,671), (06/07: 50,639), (07/08: 59,540), (08/09: 125,379), (09/10: 148,803), (10/11: 217,203), (11/12: 218,680)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

**6.2.5. Trends in PGR Applications by Age by Course Type**

Table 6.1 overleaf shows the breakdown of PGR applications by qualification type within age bracket.

When looking at applications by course type and subject area, in order to simplify the analysis, ages have been grouped into three bands – 23 and under (that is, those who are likely to have applied either during or soon after their undergraduate studies), those aged 24-30 and 31 and over.

**Table 6.1: Proportion of PGR Applications by Age by Course Type**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs</i>		6			11		17	
<i>Base: Applications</i>		5,240	6,551	7,593	25,541	30,275	51,345	56,584
<b>Age 23 and under</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	71%	77%	79%	86%	86%	87%	87%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	28%	21%	20%	13%	13%	12%	12%
<b>Age 24-30</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	78%	82%	85%	86%	86%	87%	85%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	21%	17%	15%	12%	12%	11%	13%
<b>Age 31+</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	89%	90%	93%	90%	88%	89%	88%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	2%	3%	3%	4%	7%	6%	7%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	9%	7%	4%	6%	5%	5%	6%

Generally over the seven year time period, the shift in the profile of PGR applications away from Research Masters and towards PhDs is evident in all three age bands.

The proportion of PGR applications that were for PhDs increased over the seven years among all age groups. Generally, those aged 31 and over were more likely to apply for a PhD (both the case for PhDs as well as Professional doctorates); however, growth was strongest in applications from those aged 23 and under. The proportion of applications for PhD submitted by this age group increased by 16 percentage points (from 71% of applications in 2005/06, to 87% in 2011/12); in comparison, the proportion of applications for PhDs from those aged 31 and over increased by a smaller four percentage points (from 89% of applications in 2005/06 to 88% in 2011/12).



### 6.2.6. Trends in PGT Applications by Age by Course Type

Table 6.2 overleaf shows the profile of PGT applications by qualification types for each of the three age groups.

The likelihood to submit an application for a Masters degree decreased with age – Masters degree applications accounted for an average of 97% of applications submitted by those aged 23 and under, an average of 91% of applications submitted by those aged 24-30, and an average of 77% of applications submitted by those aged 31+.

While the proportion of applications submitted for postgraduate diplomas and certificates remained fairly consistent across the seven year period for those aged 23 and under (between 2% and 3% of applications each year) and for those aged 24-30 (between 4% and 5% of applications each year), there was an increase in the proportion of applications to postgraduate diplomas and certificates submitted by those aged 31 and over. Throughout the period, this age group were more likely to submit applications for postgraduate diplomas and certificates, with 12% doing so in 2006/07. There was then a year on year increase, until the figure reached 18% in 2011/12.

It is likely that this increased level of applications for postgraduate diplomas and certificates is linked to the increasing demand for and offers of postgraduate-level CPD courses, funded by employers for their employees; this correlates with the greater proportion of applications submitted by those aged 31 and over, as such courses are designed for professionals who have already reached a certain level in their career.

Applications to MBAs were also more likely to be submitted by more mature candidates – they accounted for an average of 8% of applications submitted by those aged 31 and over, an average of 5% of applications submitted by those aged 24-30, and an average of 1% of applications submitted by those aged 23 and under. Again, undertaking an MBA is strongly linked to career development, which would explain why those who are further on in their career were more likely to submit an application. In 2011/12, just 1% of candidates aged 23 and under applied for this type of qualification, compared to 4% of those aged 24-30 and 8% of those aged 31 and over.

Table 6.2: Proportion of PGT Applications by Age by Course Type

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs</i>		7			13		20	
<i>Base: Applications</i>		43,671	50,639	59,540	126,028	149,783	249,998	252,626
Age 23 and under	<b>Masters degrees</b>	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%	98%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Postgraduate diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Age 24-30	<b>Masters degrees</b>	91%	90%	90%	90%	90%	92%	92%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	4%	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	4%
	<b>Postgraduate diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Age 31+	<b>Masters degrees</b>	77%	78%	78%	80%	78%	77%	73%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	10%	10%	9%	6%	7%	7%	8%
	<b>Postgraduate diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	13%	12%	13%	14%	15%	16%	18%

Within each age group, the vast majority of applications submitted each year are for Masters courses.

### 6.2.7. Trends in PGR Applications by Age By Subject

Table 6.3 shows proportions of PGR applications from each of the three age groups split by subject area.

**Table 6.3: Proportion of PGR Applications by Age by Subject Area**

		Year								
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12		
		<i>Base: HEIs:</i>		6		11		17		
		<i>Base: Applications:</i>		5,240	6,551	7,593	25,541	30,275	51,345	56,584
Age 23 and under	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%		
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	4%	5%	5%	5%		
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	5%	10%	14%	7%	7%	11%	11%		
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	-	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%		
	<b>Chemistry</b>	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%		
	<b>Physics</b>	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%		
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%	4%		
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%		
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	4%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%		
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	8%	10%	11%	9%	9%	10%	11%		
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	48%	42%	36%	25%	25%	21%	21%		
	<b>Law</b>	5%	3%	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%		
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	9%	9%	9%	12%	12%	9%	8%		
	<b>Languages</b>	1%	1%	2%	5%	5%	4%	5%		
<b>Humanities</b>	5%	3%	4%	6%	6%	5%	6%			
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%			

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Education</b>	-	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	-	-	10%	10%	8%	7%
Age 24-30	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	3%	4%	5%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	6%	7%	5%	5%	8%	7%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Physics</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	10%	11%	11%	12%	12%	12%	13%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	55%	47%	45%	35%	34%	29%	28%
	<b>Law</b>	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	8%	10%	10%	10%	9%	10%	10%
	<b>Languages</b>	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	5%	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Education</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	-	<1%	-	6%	5%	3%	3%	

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Age 31+	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	1%	2%	2%	4%	5%	4%	5%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1%	<1%	1%	2%	3%	5%	6%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	7%	6%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
	<b>Physics</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	3%	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%	3%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%	4%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	14%	15%	14%	15%	14%	13%	15%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	36%	29%	31%	25%	23%	21%	20%
	<b>Law</b>	5%	6%	6%	7%	5%	4%	5%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	14%	16%	14%	13%	14%	14%	13%
	<b>Languages</b>	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
	<b>Humanities</b>	4%	4%	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Education</b>	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	6%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	2%	2%	

This analysis shows that the decline in the proportion of PGR applications for social / political / economic studies reported earlier in this report is evident within all 3 age groups. However, the decline is particularly marked among the younger age groups; the proportion

of applications submitted by those aged 24-30 and those aged 23 and under have dropped by 27 percentage points each, while the proportion of applications submitted by candidates aged 31 and over for this subject area has dropped by 16 percentage points.

Similarly, although evident among all age groups, the growth in the proportion of PGR applications for study in the biological sciences is accounted for particularly by the younger age groups. Applications for research courses in biological sciences accounted for 11% of applications from applicants aged 23 and under in 2011/12; compared with 7% of applications submitted by candidates aged 24-30 and 6% of applications submitted by candidates aged 31 and over. Among the 23 and under age group, this proportion has increased from only 5% in 2005/06.

Older candidates were more likely to apply for courses in business and administrative studies; an average of 14% of applications submitted by those aged 31 and over were for business and administrative studies, compared with an average of 10% of applications submitted by those aged 24-30 and those aged 23 and under.

### 6.2.8. Trends in PGT Applications by Age by Subject

Table 6.4 overleaf shows profile of PGT applications by subject area for each of the three age groups.

For those aged 23 and under, taught courses in business and administrative studies consistently attracted the greatest proportion of PGT applications in each year, and increased from 32% of all applications submitted by that group in 2005/06 to 42% in 2011/12. Business and administrative studies also accounted for the greatest proportions of applications submitted by those aged 24 and over. However, the proportion of applications from those aged 31 and over for business and administrative studies has declined over time from 29% in 2005/06 to 22% in 2011/12.

Social, political and economic studies received the second highest proportion of applications in each age group per year. However, the relative decline in popularity of these subjects is again evident among PGR applications from each age group. The overall drop in applications was most notable in the 23 and under age group, with 17% of applications being for this subject in 2011/12, a drop of 13 per cent from the proportion 2005/06 (compared with a drop of 8% in the 24-30 age group and a 3% drop in the 31+ age group to 17% and 15% in 2011/12 respectively).

Throughout the period, candidates in the 24-30 age group were more likely to submit applications for engineering, technology, building and architecture courses; in 2011/12, 14% of applications submitted by those aged 24-30 were for this subject area, compared to 11% of those aged 31 and over, and 10% of those aged 23 and under.

Applications submitted by those aged 31 and over were much more likely to be for education, compared to the other age groups; an average of 8% of applications from those aged 31 and over were for education courses (compared to 3% of applications from those aged 24-30 and just 2% of those aged 23 and under).

Table 6.4: Proportion of PGT Applications by Age by Subject Area

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs:</i>		7			13		20	
<i>Base: Applications:</i>		43,671	50,639	59,540	126,028	149,783	249,998	252,626
Age 23 and under	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	-	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	5%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	8%	8%	8%	12%	11%	10%	10%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	30%	28%	24%	16%	14%	18%	17%
	<b>Law</b>	6%	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%	4%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	32%	34%	38%	35%	38%	39%	42%
	<b>Languages</b>	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	4%	3%
<b>Humanities</b>	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Education</b>	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	2%	3%	3%
<b>Age 24-30</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	4%	4%	3%	3%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	2%	2%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%	5%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	14%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	25%	24%	20%	15%	15%	17%	17%
	<b>Law</b>	7%	7%	7%	9%	8%	7%	7%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	30%	31%	33%	29%	30%	28%	29%
	<b>Languages</b>	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%



		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Education</b>	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	-	<1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Age 31+	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	1%	8%	8%	4%	5%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	7%	6%	7%	11%	13%	12%	14%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	11%	14%	14%	12%	11%	11%	11%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	18%	17%	15%	12%	12%	17%	15%
	<b>Law</b>	6%	5%	5%	9%	8%	5%	5%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	29%	30%	29%	19%	20%	20%	22%
	<b>Languages</b>	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%

	Year						
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
<b>Education</b>	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	-	1%	2%	1%	1%

Subjects allied to medicine experienced a large rise in the proportion of applications from the 31+ age group (from 7% in 2005/06 to 14% in 2011/12); there was also a slight rise in applications from the 24-30 age group (from 2% in 2005/06 to 5% in 2011/12). The driving force for these increases is likely to have been the increasing popularity of postgraduate level CPD courses delivered by HEIs for the NHS, something that several institutions mentioned as having an impact on their student numbers.

## 6.3. Profile of Applications to Postgraduate Study by Gender

### 6.3.1. Applications to PGR Programmes by Gender

Figure 6.5 below set outs the gender profile applications to PGR programmes during each of the seven academic years from 2005/06 to 2011/12 inclusive.

**Figure 6.5: Proportion of Applications to PGR by Gender**



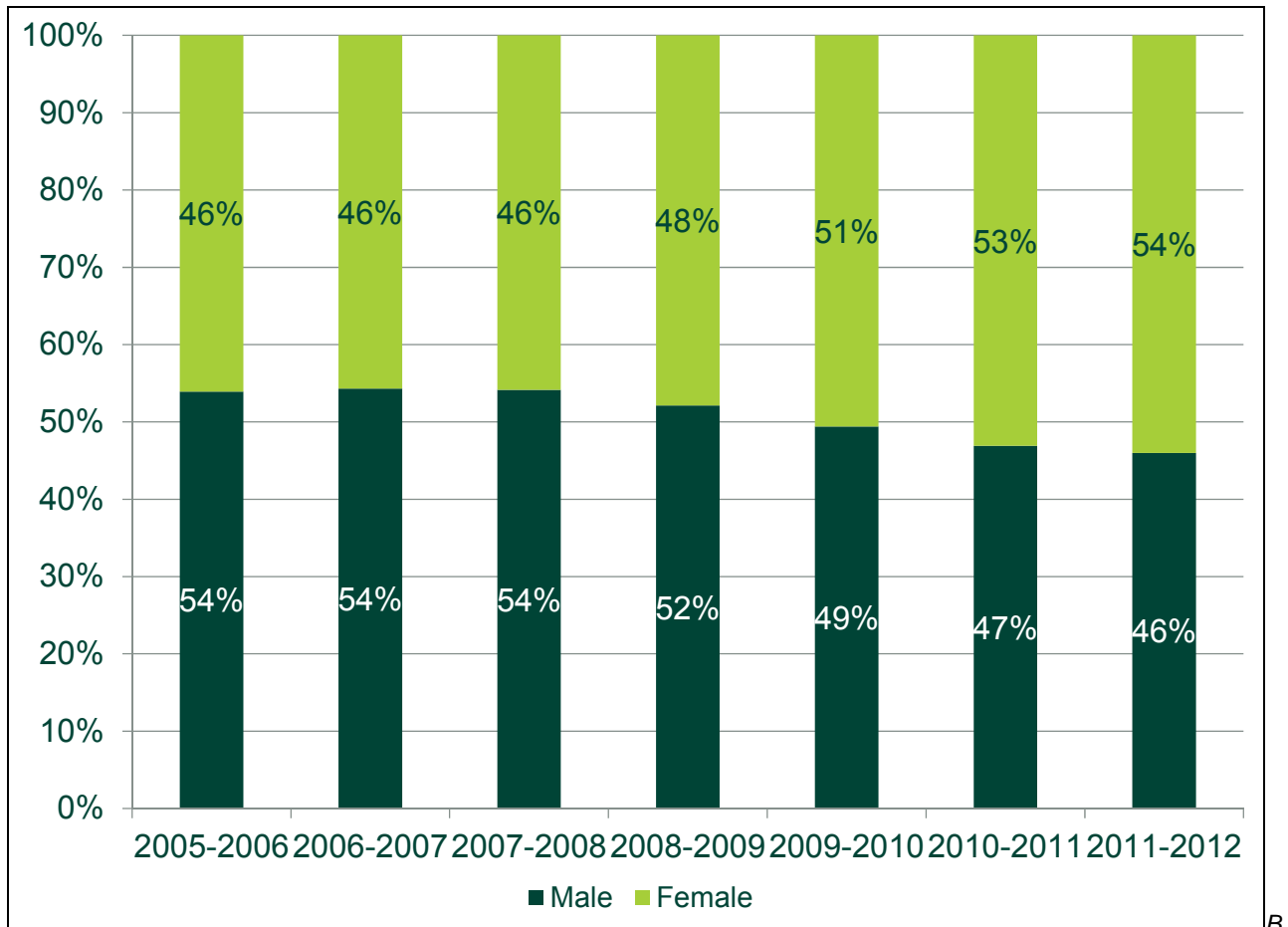
Base: All applications to PGR programmes with gender supplied (183,681)  
 (05/06: 5,282), (06/07: 6,563), (07/08: 7,639), (08/09: 25,658), (09/10: 30,368), (10/11: 51,464), (11/12: 56,724)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

Throughout the period, applications for postgraduate research programmes were more likely to be submitted by men than by women; however, the proportion of applications submitted by women has increased slightly over the seven years, rising from 37% of applications in 2005/06 to around 40% of applications from 2008/09 onwards.

### 6.3.2. Applications to PGT Programmes by Gender

Figure 6.6 overleaf set outs the proportion of applications to PGT programmes during each of the seven academic years from 2005/06 to 2011/12 inclusive, split by gender.

**Figure 6.6: Proportion of Applications to PGT by Gender**



Base: All applications to PGT programmes with gender supplied (933,389)  
 (05/06: 43,742), (06/07: 50,801), (07/08: 59,788), (08/09: 126,362), (09/10: 149,896), (10/11: 250,115), (11/12: 252,685)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

At the beginning of the period, more than half of all applications were submitted by men, (54% of applications in 2005/06); this level remained steady until 2007/08, after which the trend began to reverse, with applications submitted by women increasing in proportion until 2011/12, when they made up 54% of applications.

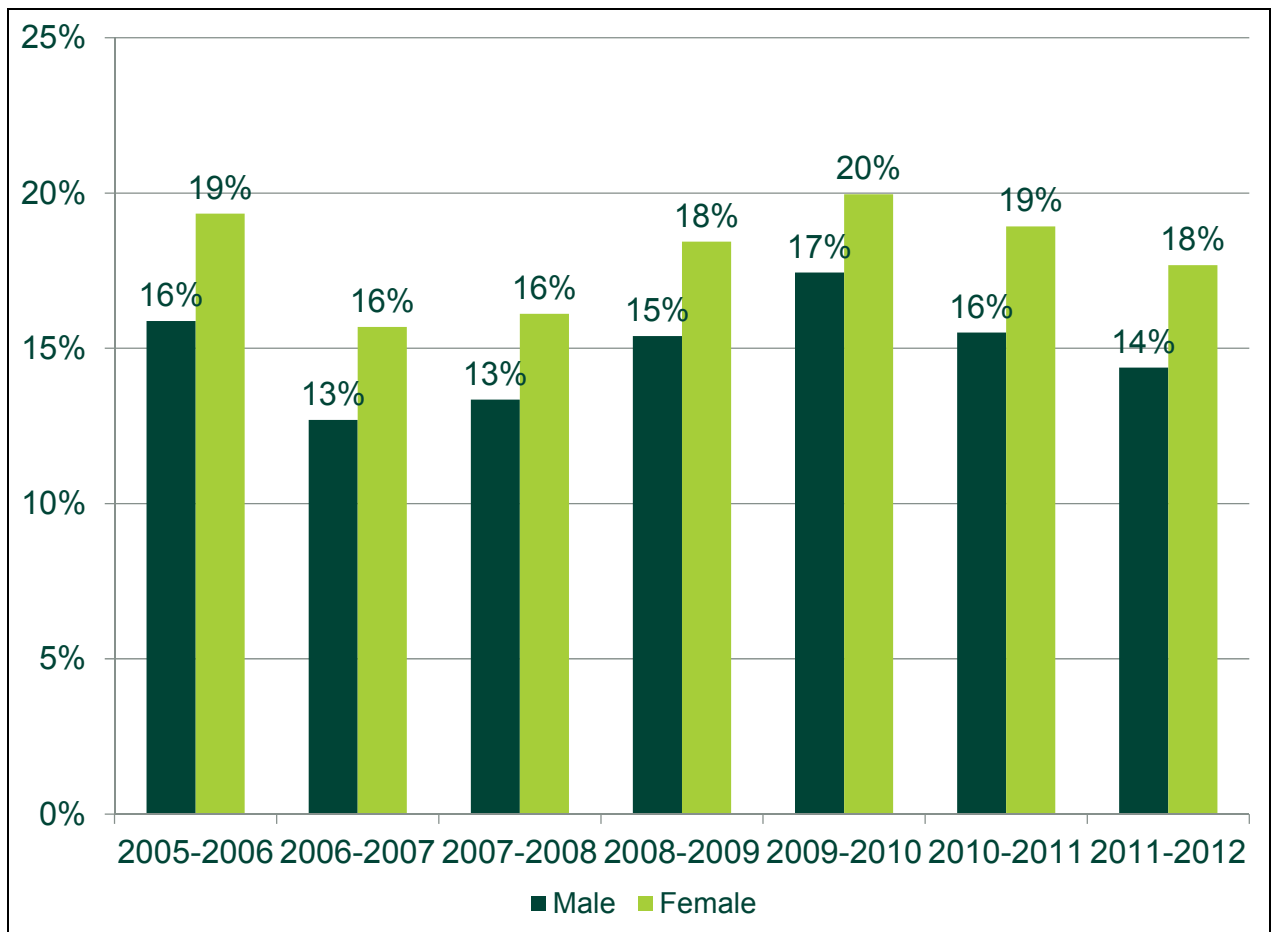
In contrast to applications to postgraduate research programmes, where those submitted by men predominated throughout, the proportion of applications for taught postgraduate courses from men and women in 2012 is closer to reflecting HESA figures for the undergraduate population at that time; according to HESA, in 2011/12 57 per cent of undergraduate students were female<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1897/239/>

### 6.3.3. Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Gender

Figure 6.7 below shows enrolments onto postgraduate research courses as a percentage of applications submitted by each gender.

**Figure 6.7: Percentage of PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment by Gender**



ase: All applications to PGR programmes with gender and enrolment status supplied (168,941)  
 (05/06: 5,274), (06/07: 6,562), (07/08: 7,636), (08/09: 25,655), (09/10: 30,366), (10/11: 44,672), (11/12: 48,776)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

In each year PGR applications submitted by women were more likely to lead to an enrolment; this difference was particularly pronounced in the first year of the period, when 19% of applications submitted by women led to enrolment, compared to 16% of applications submitted by men. The gap closed slightly by 2009/10, when 20% of applications from women led to enrolment compared to 17% of applications from men; however, in the two years following this the gap widened slightly again, and in 2011/12 18% of applications from women led to enrolment compared to just 14% of applications from men.

In terms of increases and decreases, the application to enrolment ratios of both genders have followed a broadly similar pattern across the seven years: there was a dip in

conversion rates between 2005/06 and 2006/07, before the proportion began to rise again from 2007/08 onwards until 2009/10; there was a drop again in 2010/11<sup>23</sup>.

### 6.3.4. Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Gender

Figure 6.8 below shows enrolments onto taught postgraduate courses as a percentage of applications submitted by each gender.

**Figure 6.8: Percentage of PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment by Gender**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes with gender and enrolment status supplied (865,006) (05/06: 43,742), (06/07: 50,801), (07/08: 59,788), (08/09: 125,707), (09/10: 148,905), (10/11: 217,317), (11/12: 218,746) HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

As with PGR applications, in each application year, applications from women were more likely to convert to enrolments than applications from men.

Across the first three years of the period, the proportion of applications submitted by men that led to enrolment remained broadly steady, with 21% of applications leading to enrolment in 2005/06 and 2006/07, before dropping slightly to 20% in 2007/08. The level then dropped further to 18%, remaining at that level until a big increase to 22% in 2011/12.

<sup>23</sup> Although enrolment figures for applications submitted within 2011/12 must be treated with some caution, as any applications submitted for study beginning after the academic year 2012/13 would not have been included in these figures.

Applications submitted by women were consistently more likely to lead to enrolment than men; however, as the proportion of applications from women leading to enrolment fell over the first six years, from 27% to 19%, while the proportion of male enrolment remained steadier, the gap between the genders decreased.

The proportion of applications leading to enrolment submitted by both men and women both increased in 2011/12, with 22% of applications submitted by men and 23% of applications submitted by women leading to enrolment.

### 6.3.5. Trends in PGR Applications by Gender by Course Type

Table 6.5 below shows the proportions of applications submitted by men and women for the different postgraduate research qualifications.

**Table 6.5: Proportion of PGR Applications by Gender by Qualification Type**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs</i>		6			11		17	
<i>Base: Applications</i>		5,274	6,562	7,636	25,655	30,366	51,464	56,724
<b>Male</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	77%	82%	84%	87%	85%	88%	87%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	21%	17%	14%	11%	12%	9%	10%
<b>Female</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	83%	86%	89%	87%	87%	87%	85%
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	4%
	<b>Research Masters</b>	15%	12%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%

Throughout the period, the majority of applications submitted by both men and women were for PhDs; there was a particular increase in the proportion of applications submitted by men for this qualification type, rising from 77% of applications submitted by men in 2005/06 to 87% in 2011/12. There was also a slight rise in the proportion of applications submitted by women for PhDs, from 83% in 2005/06 to 85% in 2011/12.

There was also a slight increase in applications for professional doctorates over the seven years; in 2005/06 2% of applications submitted by women and 1% of applications submitted by men were for professional doctorates, increasing to 4% and 3% respectively in 2011/12.

The proportion of applications submitted by both men and women for research masters declined across the period; in 2005/06 applications for research masters comprised 21% of all applications submitted by men, while by 2011/12 this figure had halved to just 10%. Of applications submitted by women, in 2005/06 15% were for research masters, dropping to 10% in 2007/08 and then remaining at that level for the rest of the period.

### 6.3.6. Trends in PGT Applications by Gender by Course Type

Table 6.6 shows the proportions of applications submitted by men and women for the different taught postgraduate qualification types.

**Table 6.6: Proportion of PGT Applications by Qualification Type by Gender**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs</i>		7			13		20	
<i>Base: Applications</i>		43,742	50,801	59,788	126,362	149,896	250,115	252,685
Male	<b>Masters degrees</b>	91%	90%	89%	90%	91%	93%	92%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	5%	6%	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%
	<b>Postgraduate diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Female	<b>Masters degrees</b>	91%	91%	91%	93%	93%	94%	93%
	<b>Masters of Business Administration</b>	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
	<b>Postgraduate diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%



The proportion of applications for each PGT qualification type is very similar for both genders. For both men and women, the vast majority of PGT applications were for Masters degrees; these accounted for 91% of applications submitted by men and women in 2005/06, rising slightly to 92% and 93% respectively in 2011/12.

Applications submitted by men were more likely to be for MBAs than applications submitted by women in each of the seven years, with an average of 5% compared to 1%; however, the proportion of applications submitted by men for MBAs declined slightly from high points of 6% between 2006/07 and 2008/09 to 4% in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Applications submitted by women were slightly more likely to be for postgraduate diplomas and certificates than applications submitted by men; levels remained broadly consistent across the seven years, and in 2011/12 6% of applications submitted by women and 4% of applications submitted by men were for postgraduate diplomas and certificates.

### 6.3.7. Trends in PGR Applications by Gender By Subject

Table 6.7 below shows the proportions of applications submitted by men and women for different postgraduate research subject areas.

**Table 6.7: Proportion of PGR Applications by Subject Area by Gender**

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs:</i>		6			11		17	
<i>Base: Applications:</i>		5,274	6,562	7,636	25,655	30,366	51,464	56,724
<b>Male</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	3%	4%	5%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3%	5%	6%	4%	5%	8%	7%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
	<b>Physics</b>	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	14%	16%	16%	16%	16%	17%	18%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	45%	38%	36%	27%	26%	22%	21%
	<b>Law</b>	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	11%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	11%
	<b>Languages</b>	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Humanities</b>	5%	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Education</b>	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	6%	5%	4%	3%
<b>Female</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	1%	2%	2%	4%	5%	5%	5%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1%	<1%	<1%	4%	5%	6%	7%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	5%	8%	10%	7%	7%	12%	11%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Physics</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

	Year						
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	5%	5%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	6%	6%
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	53%	45%	44%	33%	32%	26%	25%
<b>Law</b>	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	8%	11%	10%	9%	10%	9%	9%
<b>Languages</b>	3%	3%	3%	6%	6%	5%	5%
<b>Humanities</b>	5%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Education</b>	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	7%	7%	5%	4%

The largest proportion of applications submitted by each gender each year were for social / political / economic studies. A higher proportion of applications submitted by women were for this subject compared to men – a gap of 8% in 2005/06 falling to a gap of 4% in 2011/12. The proportion of applications for this subject by both genders declined each year, and in 2011/12 applications were around half the 2005/06 level, accounting 21% of applications submitted by men and 25% of applications submitted by women.

There was a large difference in the proportions of applications for engineering / technology / building / architecture among men and women, with more than twice as many of the applications submitted by men each year being for this subject; in 2011/12, 18% of

applications from men were for engineering / technology / building / architecture compared to 6% of applications from women.

Applications for business and administrative studies contributed the third highest amount of all applications submitted by men, accounting for 12% of applications on average, and 11% in 2011/12. A lower proportion of applications submitted by women were for this subject, with an average of 9% of applications submitted across the seven years, and the same level in 2011/12.

Of the applications submitted by women, a higher proportion were for biological sciences compared to applications submitted by men. However, the proportion of applications submitted by both genders for biological sciences increased across the period, rising from 3% of applications submitted by men and 5% of applications submitted by women in 2005/06 to 7% of applications submitted by men and 11% of applications submitted by women in 2011/12.

In each of the seven years, compared to men, a higher proportion of applications submitted by women were for subjects allied to medicine, although again the proportion of applications submitted by both genders for this subject area increased over time. Subjects allied to medicine accounted for less than 1% of applications from men in 2005/06, rising to 5% in 2011/12, while it accounted for 1% of applications from women in 2005/06, rising to 7% in 2011/12.

Within the period there was an increase in the number of applications submitted by women for languages courses, rising from 3% of applications in 2005/06 to 5% in 2011/12 (with high points of 6% in 2008/09 and 2009/10).

There was a similar pattern in applications for medicine and dentistry, with 1% of applications submitted by both men and women in 2005/06 being for this subject, rising to 3% of applications submitted by men and 5% of applications submitted by women in 2011/12.

In the first few years of the period the proportions of applications submitted by men and women for education courses were broadly in line with each other at around 2%; however, the proportion of applications submitted by women for this subject increased in 2008/09, after which a consistently higher proportion of applications submitted by women were for education. In 2011/12, education accounted for 4% of applications submitted by women, compared to 2% of applications submitted by men.

### **6.3.8. Trends in PGT Applications by Gender By Subject**

Table 6.8 overleaf shows the proportions of applications submitted by men and women for different taught postgraduate subject areas.

Table 6.8: Proportion of PGT Applications by Subject Area by Gender

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<i>Base: HEIs:</i>		7			13		20	
<i>Base: Applications:</i>		43,742	50,801	59,788	126,362	149,896	250,115	252,685
Male	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	2%	2%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	6%	5%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	16%	17%	17%	19%	19%	20%	20%
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	21%	20%	17%	13%	13%	15%	14%
	<b>Law</b>	6%	5%	5%	7%	7%	5%	5%
<b>Business /</b>	32%	33%	35%	31%	33%	31%	33%	

		Year						
		2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	<b>administrative studies</b>							
	<b>Languages</b>	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Humanities</b>	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<b>Education</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	-	<1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	5%	5%	2%	2%
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	3%	2%	3%	7%	7%	5%	5%
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Female</b>	<b>Chemistry</b>	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Physics</b>	-	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	6%

	Year						
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	30%	29%	25%	17%	15%	19%	18%
<b>Law</b>	7%	7%	7%	9%	8%	5%	5%
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	30%	31%	33%	31%	34%	36%	38%
<b>Languages</b>	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%
<b>Humanities</b>	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Education</b>	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	<1%	<1%	-	1%	2%	2%	2%

Applications for business and administrative studies made up the largest proportion of applications submitted by men in each year of the period, and the largest proportion of applications submitted by women every year apart from 2005/06 (when it was equal to the proportion of applications for social / political / economic studies). The proportions of applications submitted by men and women for this subject were broadly similar throughout the period, at around three in ten applications, although by the end of the period the number of applications submitted by women for business and administrative studies were approaching four in ten. In 2011/12, 33% of applications submitted by men and 38% of applications submitted by women were for business and administrative studies.

Applications for engineering / technology / building / architecture made up a far smaller proportion of applications submitted by women; in 2011/12 just 6% of applications submitted by women were for this subject, around three times lower than the 20% of applications submitted by men.

Throughout the period, applications submitted by women were more likely to be for social / political / economic studies than applications submitted by men, accounting for 30% of applications submitted by women in 2005/06 compared to 21% of applications submitted by men. However, the proportion decreased over time, with a particularly big drop in 2008/09 for both genders (falling to 17% of applications submitted by women and 13% of applications submitted by men). Although the proportion of applications submitted for this

subject increased again slightly after that dip, in 2011/12 the level stood at 18% of applications submitted by women and 14% of applications submitted by men.

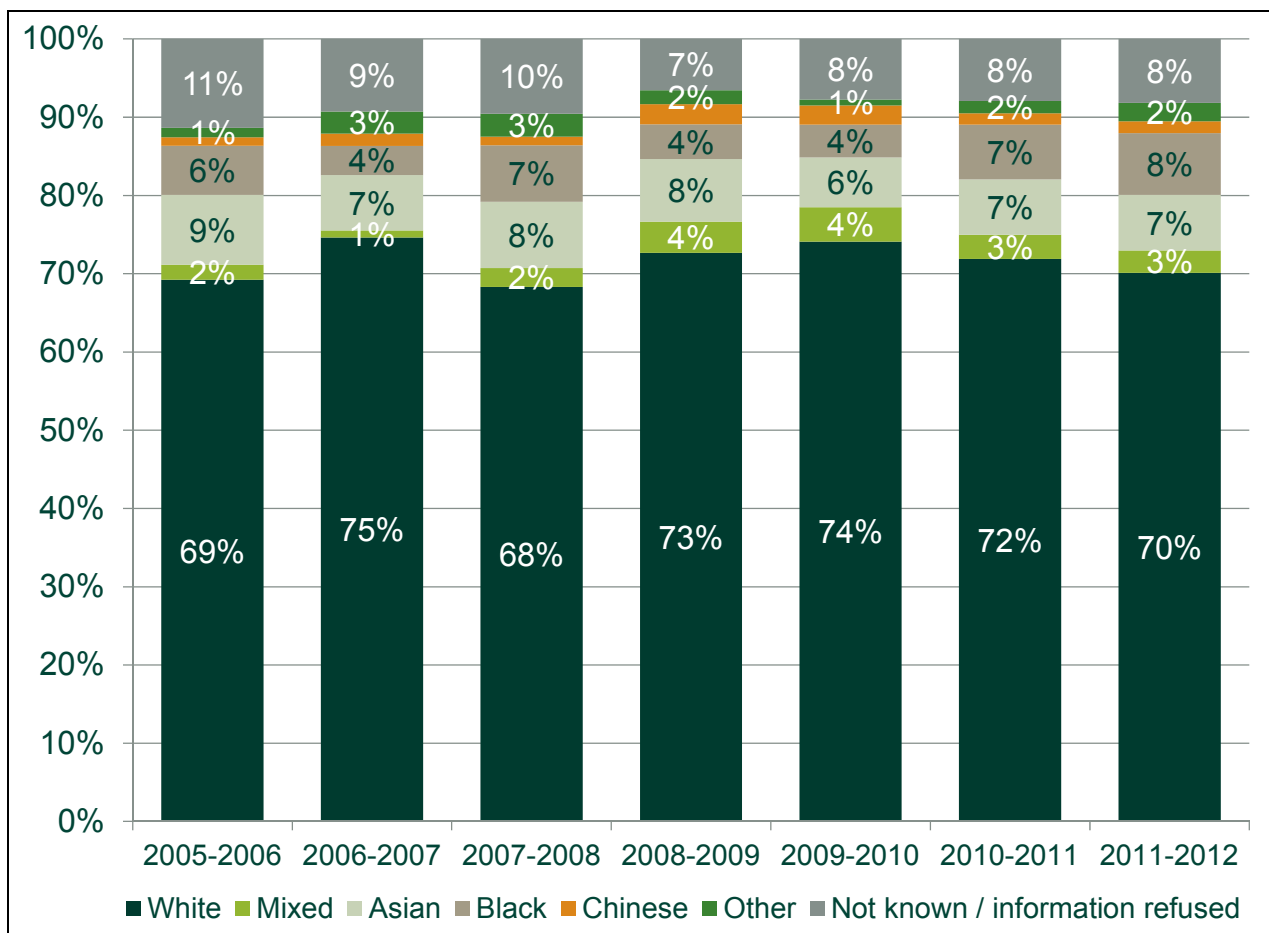
### 6.4. Profile of UK-domiciled Applications to Postgraduate Study by Ethnicity

This section looks at the trends in application by ethnicity. It looks at an overall breakdown of PGR and PGT applications and at conversion ratios for different ethnic groups. The base sizes of applications for individual ethnic groups were not large enough to support some of the more detailed analysis by course type and subject area within ethnicity that has been shown in the sections on age and gender.

#### 6.4.1. UK- domiciled Applications to PGR Programmes by Ethnicity

Figure 6.9 set outs the profile of PGR applications submitted by **UK-domiciled** candidates to PGR programmes by ethnicity.

**Figure 6.9: Proportion of UK-domiciled Applications to PGR by Ethnicity**



ase: All UK-domiciled applications to PGR programmes with ethnicity supplied (39,407)  
 (05/06: 967), (06/07: 1,219), (07/08: 1,449), (08/09: 4,615), (09/10: 6,135), (10/11: 12,492), (11/12: 12,530)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

The proportion of PGR applications submitted by white candidates has fluctuated slightly between 68% and 75% across the period. In 2011/12 70% of applications to postgraduate research courses were submitted by white applicants. This is lower than the proportion



with an ethnic group of white in the general population of England and Wales (86%)<sup>24</sup> and slightly lower than the proportion of white undergraduate students in 2011/12 (80%)<sup>25</sup>.

Applications submitted by Asian applicants made up the second largest group within UK-domiciled applications each year up until 2011/12, when, at 7%, the proportion of applications submitted by Asian candidates for postgraduate research was 1% lower than the proportion of applications submitted by Black candidates. This proportion is very close to the proportion of people with an Asian ethnic background in the general population (6.8%), as well as the proportion of undergraduate students with an Asian ethnic background in 2011/12 (7.8%).

The proportion of applications submitted by black candidates varied somewhat in the early years of the period, dropping from 6% in 2005/06 to 4% in 2006/07, before rising to 7% in 2007/08. After falling back to 4% in 2008/09 and 2009/10, the proportion of applications from black candidates began to increase again in 2010/11, reaching 8% in 2011/12. This proportion is greater than that of the general population, where 3.3% report coming from a black ethnic background; it is also slightly higher than the proportion of black undergraduates, which stood at 6% in 2011/12.

There were fairly high levels of applications each year where the candidate either did not record or refused to disclose their ethnicity; this was highest in 2005/06 when the proportion was 11%, and lowest in 2008/09, when the proportion was 7%. In 2011/12 ethnicity information was refused or unknown for 8% of applications. The fluctuations in these figures is likely to have been caused by changes in how this information is collected by the individual HEIs' application forms and systems throughout the period.

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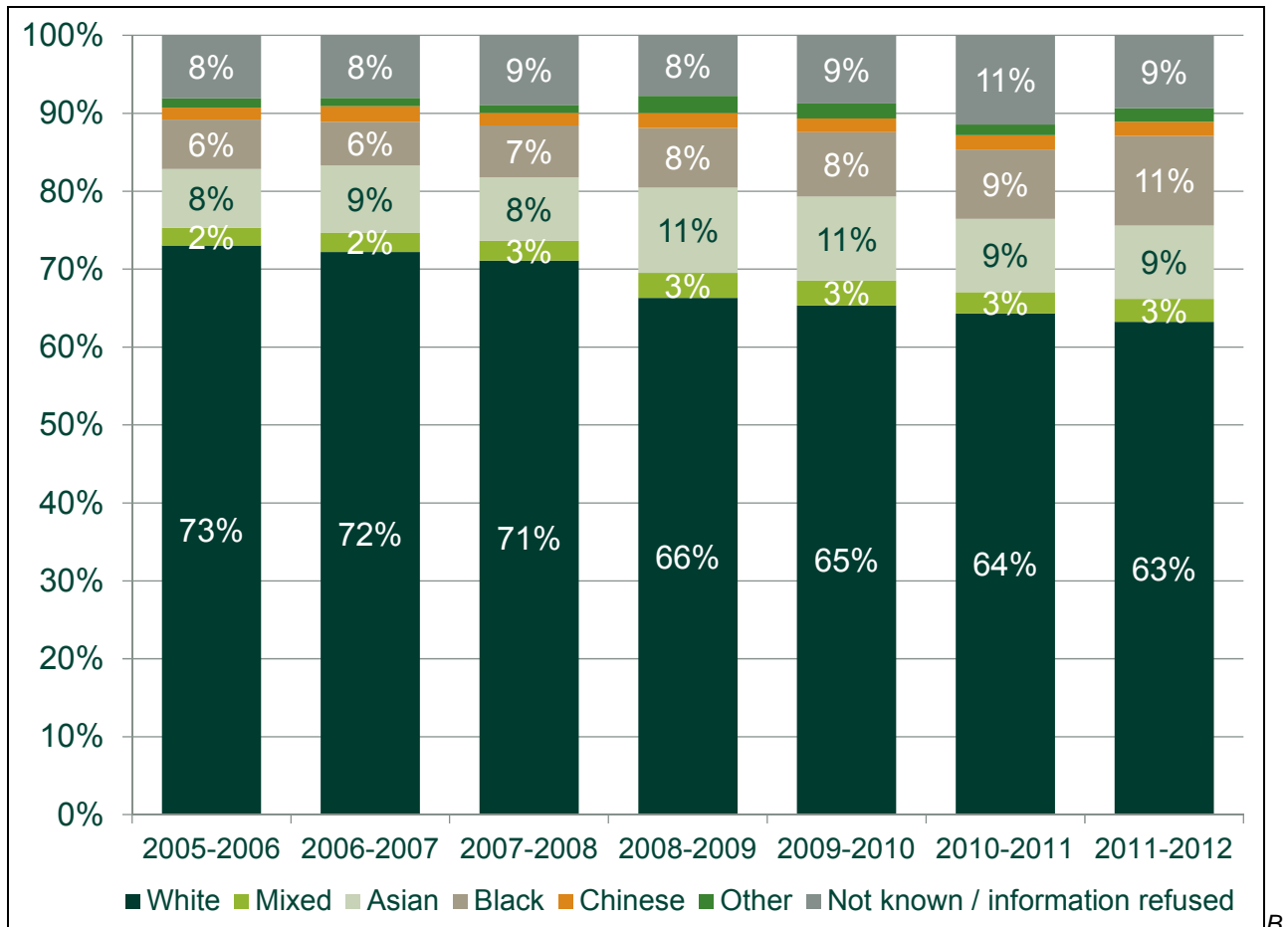
<sup>24</sup> 2011 Census, *Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales*, ONS [accessed 31/10/2013 at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/index.html>]

<sup>25</sup> *UK domiciled HE students by level of study, gender, mode of study, first year identifier and ethnicity 2011/12*, HESA data table [accessed 31/10/2013 at: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1897/239/>]

### 6.4.2. UK-domiciled Applications to PGT Programmes by Ethnicity

Figure 6.10 shows the ethnicity profile of applications submitted by UK-domiciled candidates to PGT programmes.

**Figure 6.10: Proportion of UK-domiciled Applications to PGT by Ethnicity**



Base: All UK-domiciled applications to PGT programmes with ethnicity supplied (128,895)  
 (05/06: 6,240), (06/07: 6,897), (07/08: 7,854), (08/09: 19,772), (09/10: 21,244), (10/11: 34,687), (11/12: 32,201)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

Although the majority of applications each year were submitted by white candidates, this proportion has fallen fairly steadily across the seven years, from nearly three-quarters (73%) of applications in 2005/06 to just over three-fifths (63%) in 2011/12. This proportion is considerably lower than the 86% of white people in the general population of England and Wales, and 80% in the 2011/12 undergraduate population.

However, in terms of absolute numbers, applications submitted by white candidates increased year on year throughout the period; the decline in proportion was due to the fact that the numbers of applications submitted by applicants from other ethnic backgrounds increased at a greater rate: while applications submitted by white candidates increased by 66% between 2005/06 and 2011/12, this compared to an average 168% increase in applications from candidates from other ethnic groups; among these, applications from black candidates experienced the largest growth in numbers across the period, with a 248% increase.

The proportion of applications submitted by Black candidates also increased year on year; in 2011/12, applications from Black candidates made up 11% of the total, up from just 6% in 2005/06. This proportion is notably higher than that within the general population (3.3%) and the undergraduate population in 2011/12 (6%).

The proportion of applications from Asian applicants increased from 8% in 2007/08 to a high of 11% in both 2008/09 and 2009/10; however, the following year this the proportion dropped slightly to 9%, and remained at this level in 2011/12. This proportion is slightly higher than the proportion of people with an Asian ethnic background in the general population (6.8%) and in the 2011/12 undergraduate population (7.8%).

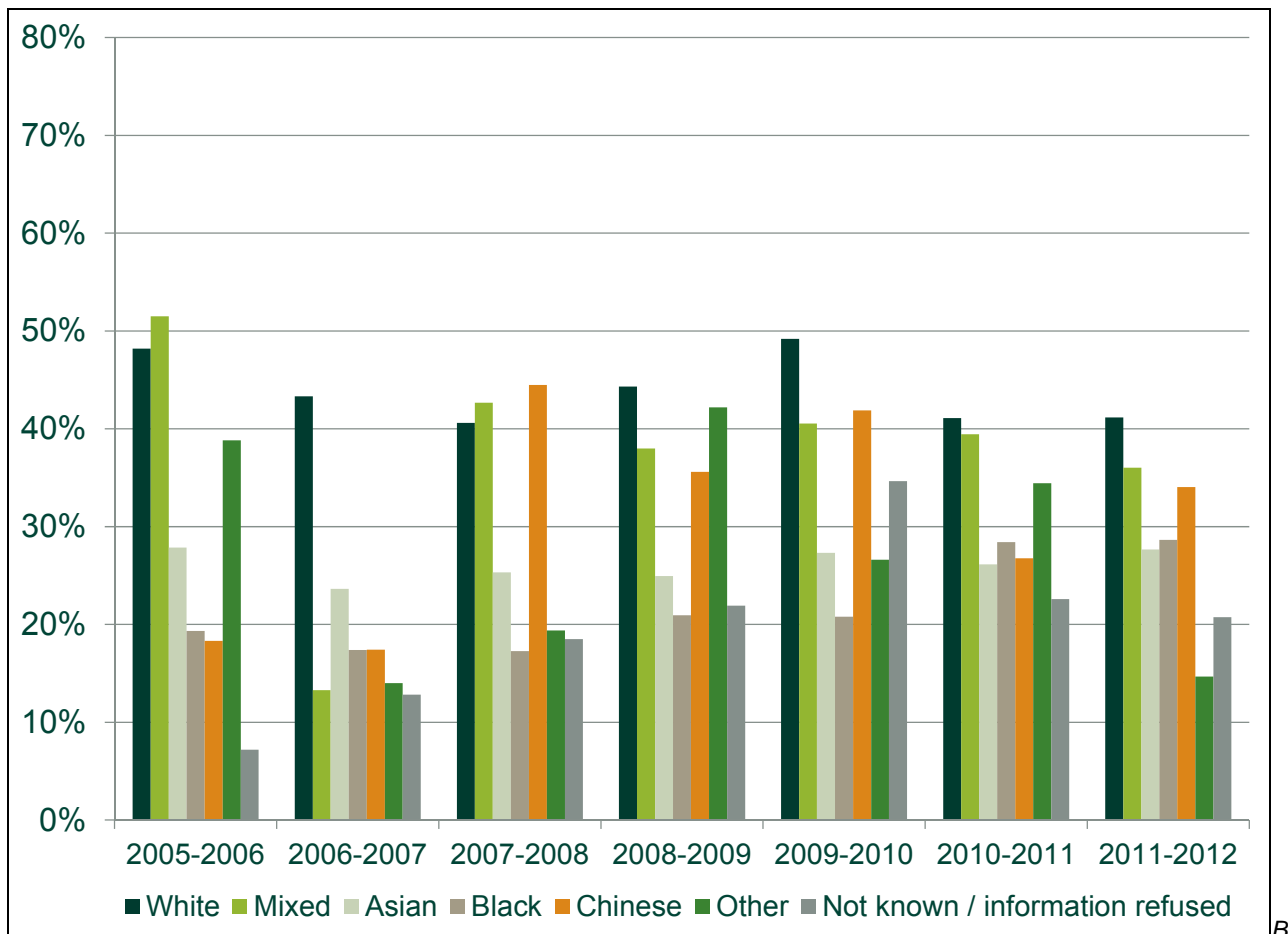
Applications from applicants with a mixed, Chinese or other ethnic background made up a minority of the total number of applications, and the proportions of each remained fairly steady across the period; in 2011/12, 3% of applications were submitted by applicants with a mixed ethnic background, 2% were submitted by those with a Chinese background, and a further 2% were submitted by those with an other ethnic background. This compares to general population figures of 2.2% with a mixed ethnic background, 0.7% with a Chinese ethnic background, and 1% with an other ethnic background, and to 2011/12 undergraduate figures of 3.9% with a mixed or other ethnic background and 0.8% with a Chinese ethnic background.

As with PGR applications, there was a fairly high proportion of applications each year for which ethnicity information was either refused or unknown, although this proportion has remained relatively consistent over time.

#### **6.4.3. Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Ethnicity**

Figure 6.11 overleaf shows enrolments onto PGR courses as a percentage of applications submitted by UK-domiciled applicants from different ethnic backgrounds. Due to the low base sizes of some of the smaller ethnic groups, these figures must be taken with some caution.

**Figure 6.11: Percentage of UK-domiciled PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment split by ethnicity**



ase: All UK-domiciled applications to PGR programmes with ethnicity and enrolment status supplied (34,885)  
 (05/06: 967), (06/07: 1,219), (07/08: 1,449), (08/09: 4,615), (09/10: 6,135), (10/11: 10,318), (11/12: 10,182)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

Over time, the distinction between PGR application to enrolment ratios by ethnic group has become less marked but even in 2011/12 there were still differences.

Throughout the period, between two-fifths and one half of all applications submitted by white candidates led to enrolment, the exact proportion varying between 41% and 49%. The highest levels came in 2005/06 (48%), 2008/09 (44%) and 2009/10 (49%). In 2011/12 41% of applications submitted by White candidates led to enrolment.

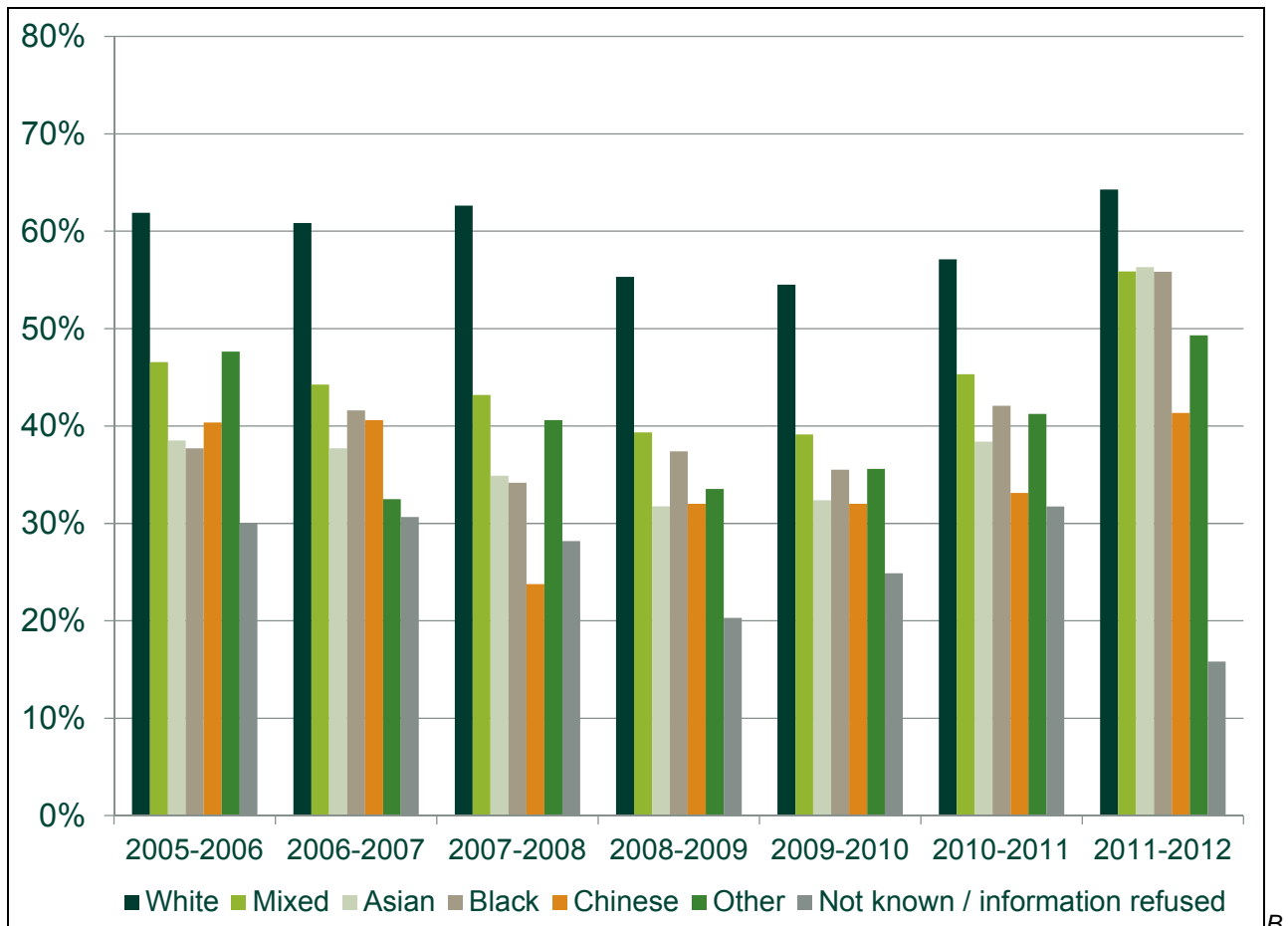
The proportion of applications submitted by Asian candidates leading to enrolment remained fairly steady across the seven years. There was a slight drop from 28% in 2005/06 to 24% in 2006/07; however, after this the proportion began to increase gradually, getting back up to 28% by 2011/12.

The proportion of applications from Black candidates that led to enrolment increased throughout the period, rising from 19% in 2005/06 to 29% in 2011/12.

#### 6.4.4. Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Ethnicity

Figure 6.12 below shows enrolments onto PGT courses as a percentage of applications submitted by UK-domiciled applicants from different ethnic backgrounds.

**Figure 6.12: Percentage of UK-domiciled PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment split by ethnicity**



ase: All UK-domiciled applications to PGT programmes with ethnicity and enrolment status supplied (119,305) (05/06: 6,240), (06/07: 6,897), (07/08: 7,854), (08/09: 19,761), (09/10: 21,227), (10/11: 29,650), (11/12: 27,676) HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

As with PGR applications, the difference between application to enrolment ratios by ethnic group appears to have closed over time.

However, in each year covered, applications submitted by White candidates were more likely to lead to an enrolment; this proportion decreased from 63% in 2007/08 to 55% in 2008/09 and 2009/10, before increasing again to 57% in 2010/11 and then 64% in 2011/12, the highest proportion of the period.

Applications submitted by applicants from Mixed, Asian and Black backgrounds were also much more likely to lead to an enrolment in 2011/12 compared with previous years; between 2005/05 and 2010/11, an average of 43% of applications from applicants with a Mixed ethnic background, 38% of applications submitted by Black candidates, and 36% of applications from Asian candidates led to enrolment. However, in 2011/12 the proportion for each of these groups was 56%.

Applications from applicants with a Chinese ethnic background were more likely to lead to enrolment in 2005/06 and 2006/07, when 40% and 41% of applications led to enrolment. There was then a sharp drop in 2007/08 to 24%, before the proportion rose to around a third of applications between 2008/09 and 2010/11. In 2011/12, the proportion increased back to the level seen at the beginning of the period, at 41%.

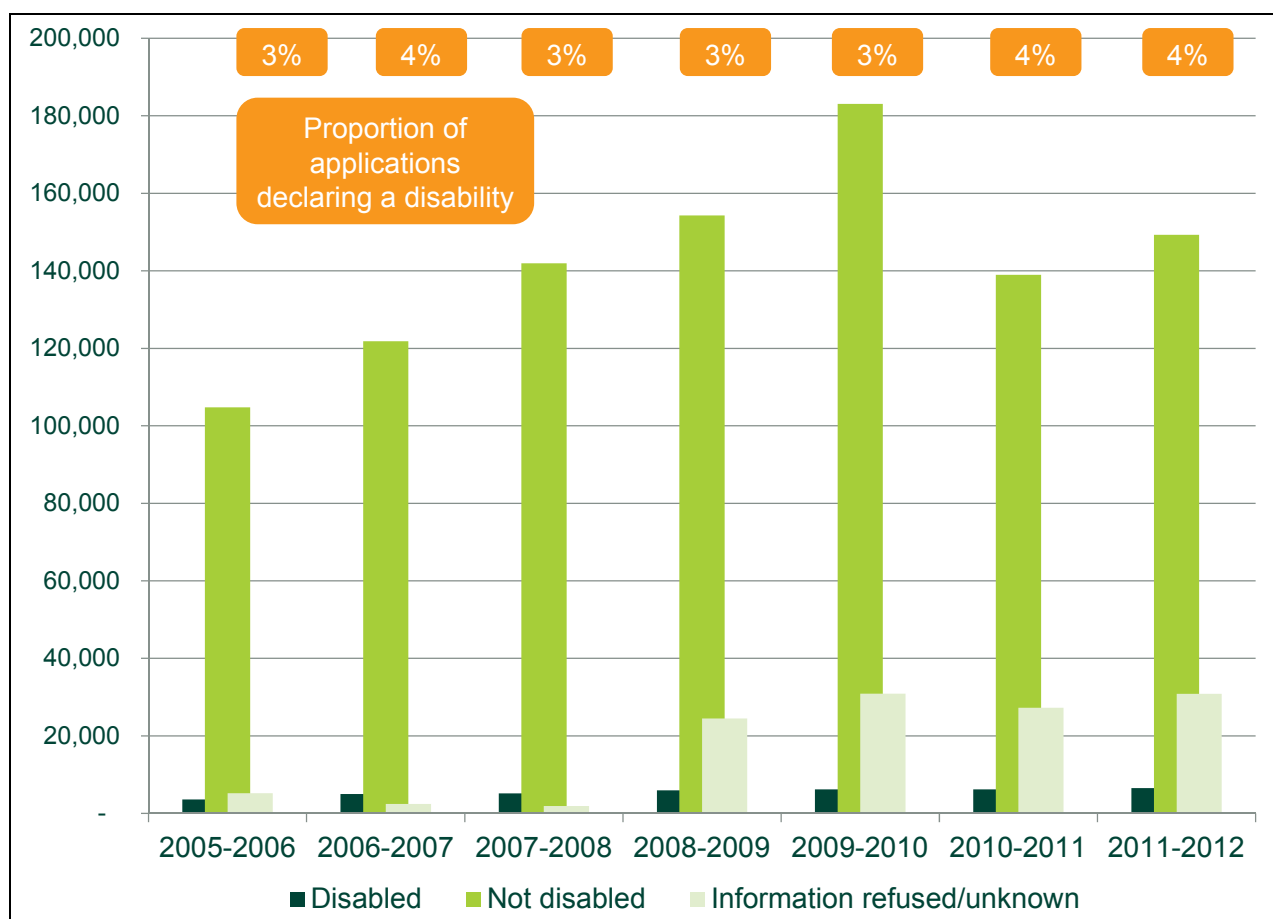
## 6.5. Profile of Applications to Postgraduate Study by Disability Status

This section looks at the trends in application by whether or not applicants stated that they had a disability. It looks at an overall breakdown of PGR and PGT applications and at conversion ratios. The base size of individuals reporting a disability was too low to support detailed analysis by course type and subject.

### 6.5.1. Applications to PGR Programmes by Disability Status

Figure 6.13 below set outs the volumes of applications to PGR programmes during each of the seven academic years, split by disclosed disability status.

**Figure 6.13: Proportion of Applications to PGR by Disability Status**



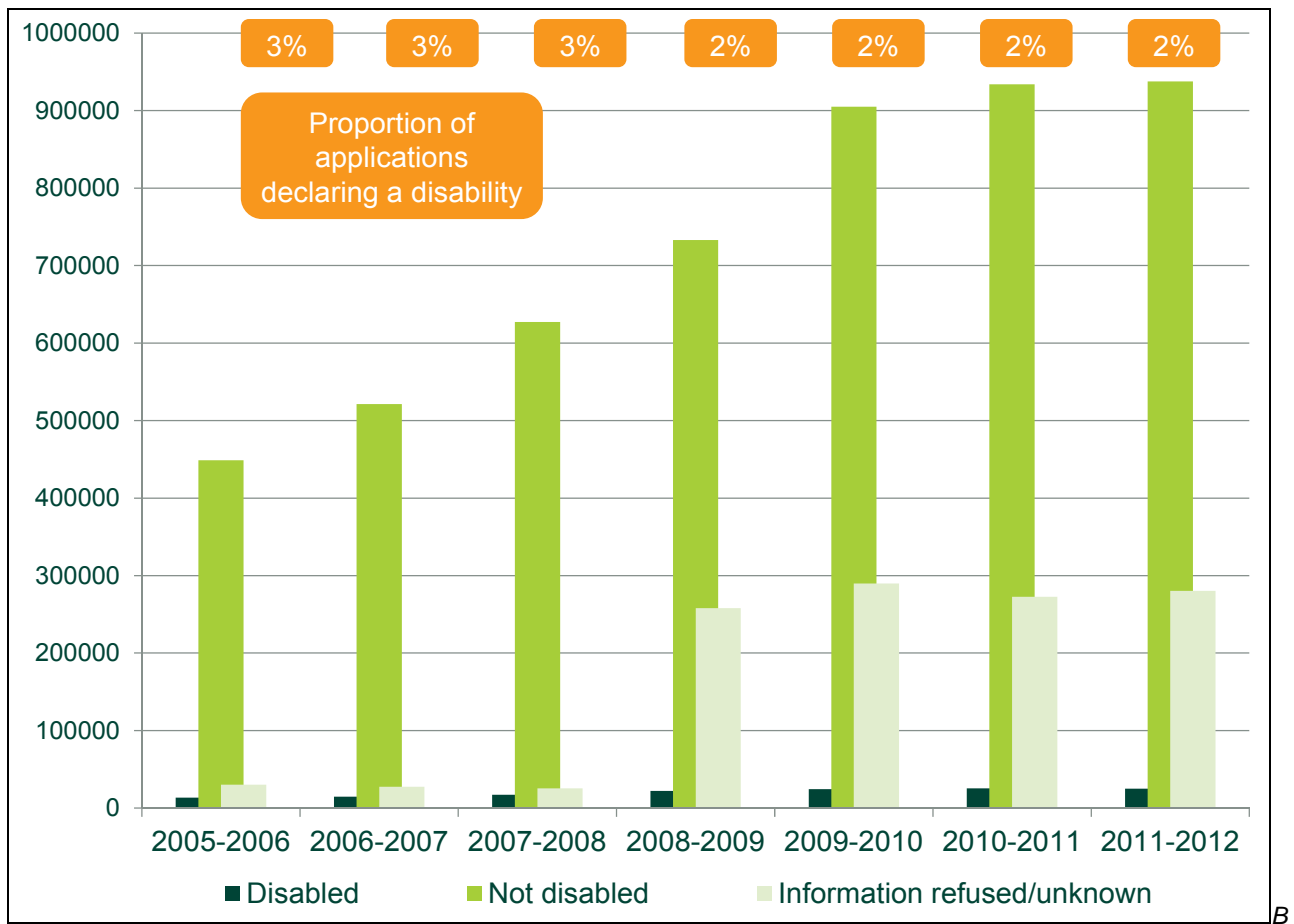
Base: All applications to PGR programmes with disability status supplied (174,535)  
 (05/06: 5,282), (06/07: 6,563), (07/08: 7,639), (08/09: 25,547), (09/10: 30,311), (10/11: 47,529), (11/12: 51,664)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 17)

There was relatively little variation across the seven years in the proportion of applications from candidates who disclosed a disability, with the level standing at 4% in 2006/07, 2010/11 and 2011/12, and at 3% in all other years.

### 6.5.2. Applications to PGT Programmes by Disability Status

Similarly, figure 6.14 below set outs the volumes of applications to PGT programmes during each of the seven academic years, split by disclosed disability status.

**Figure 6.14: Proportion of Applications to PGT by Disability Status**



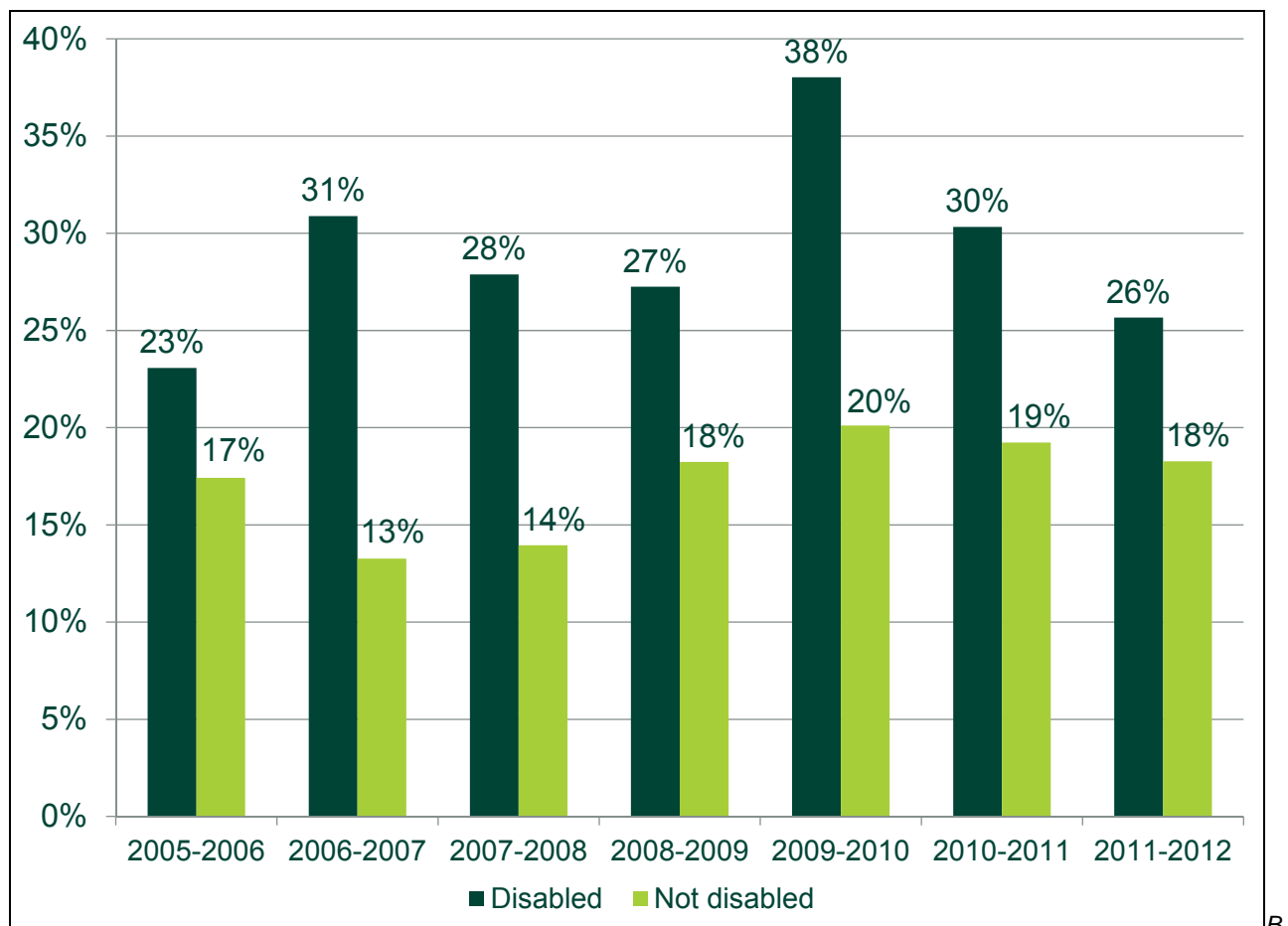
ase: All applications to PGT programmes with disability status supplied (895,113)  
 (05/06: 43,754), (06/07: 50,823), (07/08: 59,792), (08/09: 126,391), (09/10: 149,883), (10/11: 231,601), (11/12: 232,869)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 13), (10/11 – 11/12: 20)

As with applications to PGR, the proportion of applications to PGT programmes from candidates who disclosed a disability remained fairly steady across the period, although at a slightly lower level: 3% of all applications disclosed a disability in the first three years of the period, and 2% each year thereafter.

### 6.5.3. Ratios of Applications to PGR to Places Taken Up by Disability Status

Figure 6.15 shows enrolments onto postgraduate research courses as a percentage of applications submitted by those who declared they either did or did not have any disabilities.

**Figure 6.15: Percentage of PGR Applications Leading to Enrolment split by disability status**



ase: All applications to PGR programmes marked 'disabled' or 'not disabled' with enrolment status supplied (129,441) (05/06: 5,037), (06/07: 6,390), (07/08: 7,486), (08/09: 21,162), (09/10: 24,768), (10/11: 31,262), (11/12: 33,336) HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

Although making up a far smaller proportion of overall applications, applications submitted by candidates who disclosed that they had a disability were notably more likely to lead to enrolment than applications submitted by candidates who declared that they did not have any disabilities. At least a quarter of PGR applications submitted by candidates declaring a disability each year led to enrolment, with a particularly high level of enrolment in 2009/10 at 38%. Applications in the 2005/06 academic years had the lowest proportions of enrolment for candidates who declared a disability, at 23%; in 2011/12, the proportion was lower than the previous two years at 26%.



#### 6.5.4. Ratios of Applications to PGT to Places Taken Up by Disability Status

Figure 6.16 shows enrolments onto taught postgraduate courses as a percentage of applications submitted by those who declared they either did or did not have any disabilities.

**Figure 6.16: Percentage of PGT Applications Leading to Enrolment split by disability status**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes marked 'disabled' or 'not disabled' with enrolment status supplied (660,457) (05/06: 40,658), (06/07: 48,093), (07/08: 57,341), (08/09: 96,488), (09/10: 115,897), (10/11: 151,330), (11/12: 150,650) HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

As was the case with applications for PGR, applications for PGT submitted by candidates who disclosed a disability were more likely to lead to enrolment than applications submitted by candidates who disclosed that they did not have any disabilities. This proportion was highest at either end of the period, with 42% of applications submitted by those declaring a disability leading to enrolment in 2005/06 and 45% in 2011/12.

# Chapter 7: Proportion of applications resulting in an offer

**This chapter provides information on the proportion of applications that resulted in an offer for both PGR and PGT programmes firstly at an overall level, then by qualification type, HEI, subject area and domicile. This information complements data on the proportion of applications that resulted in places taken up which has been presented throughout the report.**

## **7.1. Caveats and limitations of the data**

Just two of the participating HEIs were unable to provide information about whether or not applications resulted in the offer of a place (for 2011/12 only). Data from these HEIs has therefore been excluded from the analysis in this section.

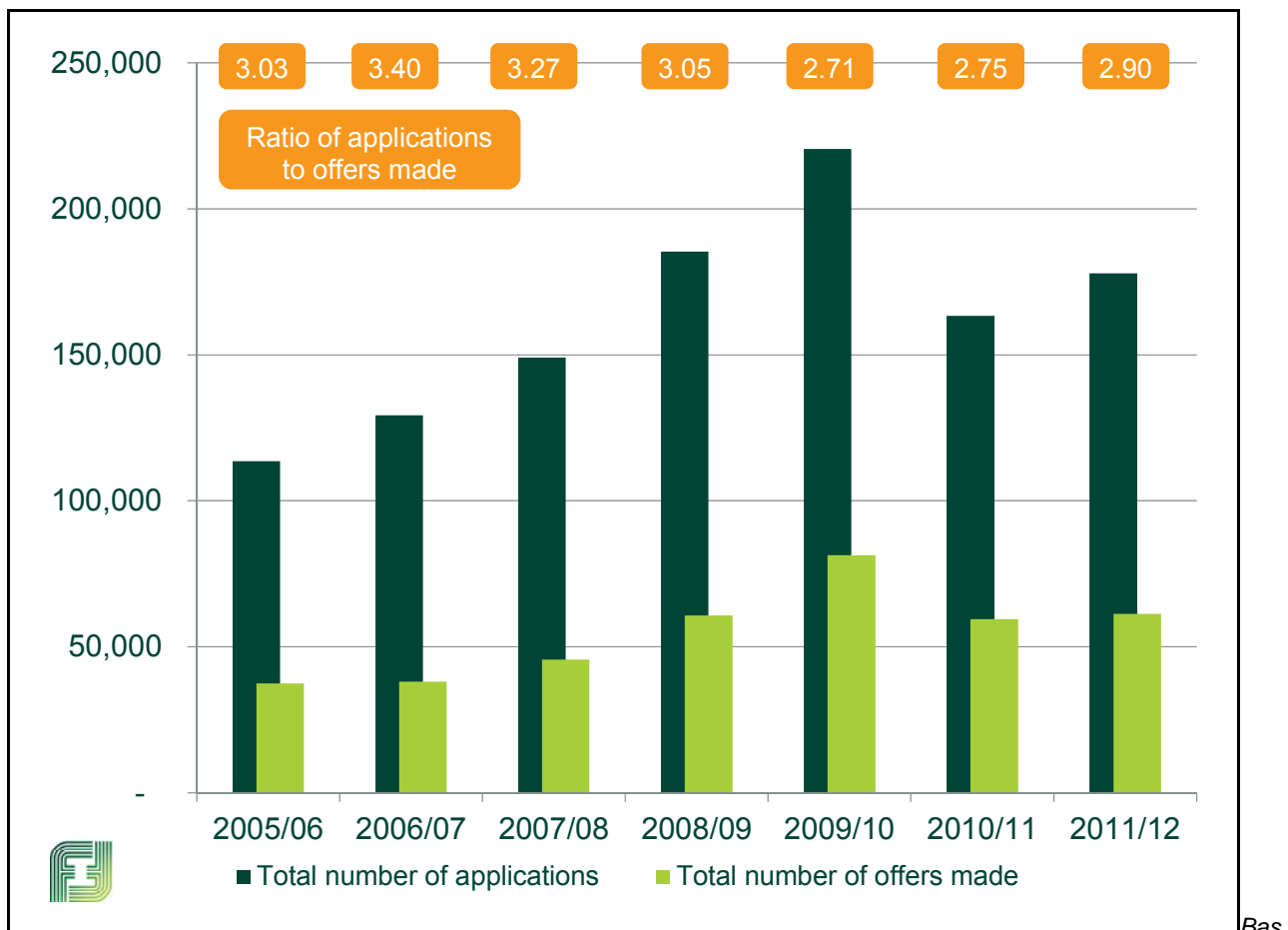
In two HEIs some records were flagged as having an offer “pending” where a decision was yet to be made; this applied to only minority of records (less than 1% of total). For the purposes of analysis in this chapter, these records have also been excluded.

## **7.2. Proportion of applications that result in an offer**

### **7.2.1. Proportion of PGR applications that result in an offer**

The ratio of PGR applications received to offers made has remained broadly consistent over the course of the past seven academic years. Since 2005/06, the ratio of applications to offers has varied between 2.71 and 3.40 applications to every place offered (Figure 7.1)

In general terms, when the volume of applications increased so too did the volume of offers made so that this applications to offers ratio remained broadly similar.

**Figure 7.1: Ratio of applications to offers made (PGR)**

e: All applications to PGR programmes with offer status supplied (169,334)  
 (05/06: 5,282), (06/07: 6,563), (07/08: 7,639), (08/09: 25,658), (09/10: 30,368), (10/11: 44,688), (11/12: 49,136)  
 HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

These trends shown in figure 7.1 generally reflect the applications-to-take-up ratios discussed earlier (section 2.2.1); as the number of offers made increased, so too did the number of applicants accepting a place to study.

In 2009/10 where the ratio of applications to enrolment was at its lowest (at 5.41 applications per place taken up), the ratio of applications to offers made was also at its lowest (2.71 applications to each place offered).

However, there is an exception; in 2008/9 when there was a relatively high ratio of applications to offers made (3.05 applications to every offer), a fairly low proportion of offers were accepted (6.01 applications to each place taken up).

The ratio of PGR applications to offers made varied considerably between the different HEIs who shared their data. Looking at the most recent application year alone, the ratios varied from 1:1 (so every PGR application resulted in an offer) to 8:1.

In comparison with 2010/11, at most HEIs it was more competitive to secure a place in the most recent academic year. Since 2010/11 for two third of participating HEIs (66%) the number of PGR applications received to every place offered has increased. A fifth of

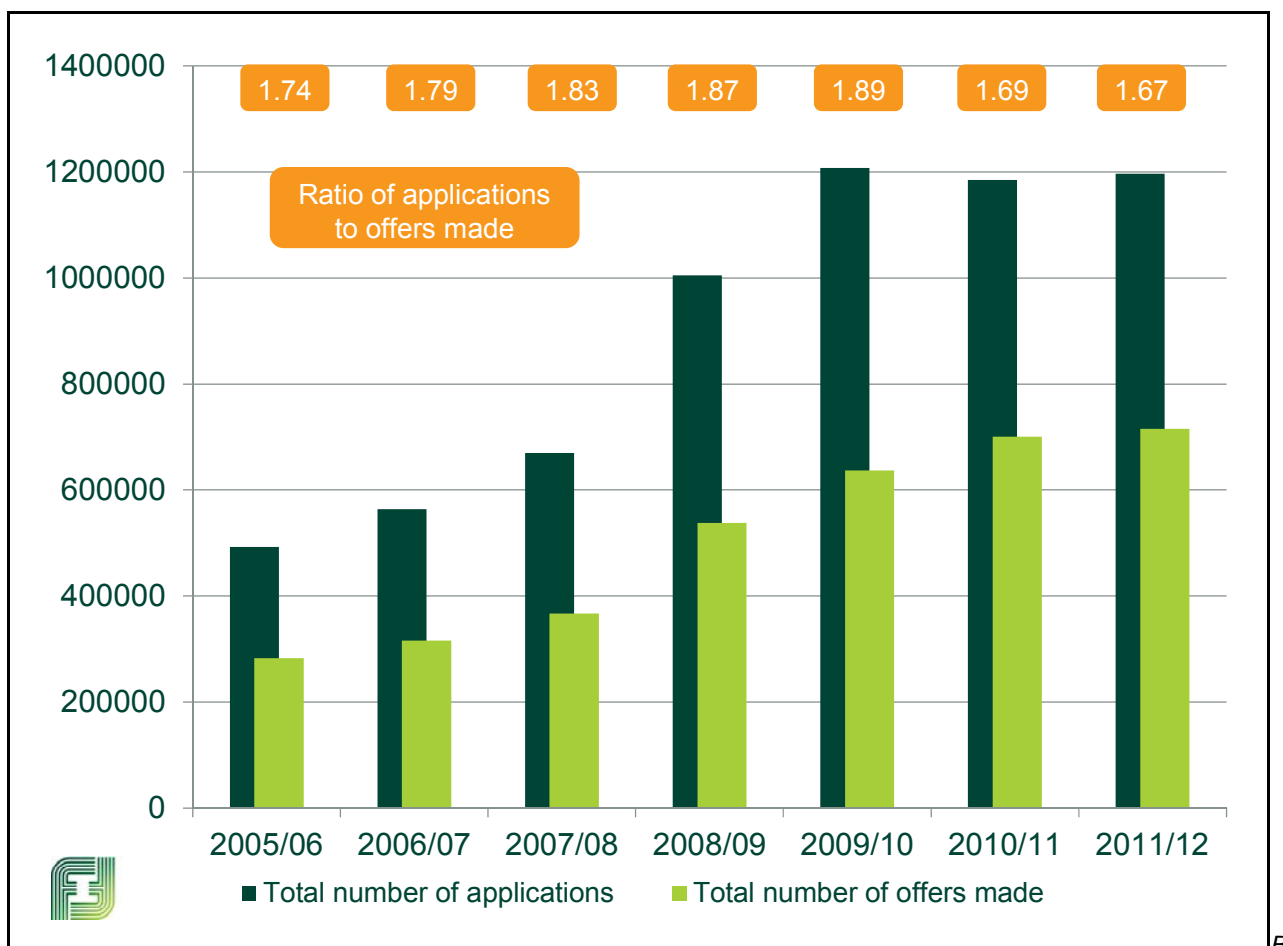
participating HEIs (20%) saw the ratio of applications to offers remain consistent and only a minority (14%) saw this ratio decrease over the course of the past two years.

### 7.2.2. Proportion of PGT applications that result in an offer

The ratio of PGT applications received to offers made has also remained consistent over the course of the past seven academic years; even more so than for PGR applications. Again there is a strong correlation between the volume of applications made in an application year and the volume of offers made.

As Figure 7.2 demonstrates, since 2005/06, the ratio of applications to offers has varied between 1.67 and 1.89 applications to every place offered. Between 2005/06 and 2009/10, the ratio of applications to offers made increased slightly year on year, before decreasing in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

**Figure 7.2: Ratio of applications to offers made (PGT)**



ase: All applications to PGT programmes with offer status supplied (866,145)  
 (05/06: 43,754), (06/07: 50,823), (07/08: 59,793), (08/09: 125,757), (09/10: 148,938), (10/11: 217,375), (11/12: 219,705)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

2011/12 saw the lowest ratio of applications to places offered (a ratio of 1.64 applications received for every place offered). Although the number of applications received increased only slightly in comparison with 2010/11 (1%), the total number of offers made increased at a slightly greater rate (2%).

There does not seem to be a particularly strong link between trends in offers made for PGR and PGT study. From 2009/10 the ratio of PGR offers increased, but in contrast, the number of proportionate offers made to PGT courses decline from this point. As such, the lowest ratio of PGT applications to offers made was evidenced in 2011/12, this was a relatively competitive year for applicants wishing to study PGR programmes.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, up until 2010/11 the ratio of applications to enrolments increased year on year. In line with this, Figure 2 above shows that up until 2009/10 this ratio of applications to offers made also increased.

However, in 2010/11 when the ratio of applications to enrolments was at its highest (5.34 applications to every registered place), proportionately the ratio of applications to offers made was comparatively low (1.69).

Again the ratios of PGT applications to offers made varied between the participating HEIs, though to a much lesser extent than at PGR level. In 2011/12 the application to offer ratio varied from 1.01:1 to 3.82:1 applications to every place offered.

### 7.3. Application to offer ratio by detailed qualification type

#### 7.3.1. Application to offer ratio by detailed qualification type (PGR)

Table 7.3 below shows the ratio of applications to offers according to specific qualification type within PGR programmes.

**Table 7.1: Ratio of applications to offers by qualification type (PGR)**

	Qualification type				
	Base: HEIs	Base: Applications	PhDs	Professional doctorates	Research Masters
<b>2005/06</b>	6	5,282	2.80	1.68	5.03
<b>2006/07</b>		6,563	3.25	1.60	5.53
<b>2007/08</b>		7,639	3.26	1.54	3.89
<b>2008/09</b>	11	25,658	3.04	2.45	3.30
<b>2009/10</b>		30,368	2.71	1.29	3.86
<b>2010/11</b>	16	44,688	2.83	1.38	2.79
<b>2011/12</b>		49,136	3.00	1.51	2.91

Over the period covered, the highest ratio of applications to offers was for Research Masters; on average 3.73 applications were received for each offer made. A particularly competitive year was in 2006/7 with more than 5 applications (5.53) submitted to every offer made. This is reflective of the ratio of applications to places taken up discussed in section 2.4.1 where the highest ratios of applications to enrolment were seen for Research Masters courses with this ratio also peaking in 2006/7.

On average across the period, 2.95 applications to PhDs were submitted for each offer made. The highest ratio of applications to offers was in 2007/08 (3.26 applications were submitted per offer) and the lowest in 2009/10 (2.71 applications per offer).

On average 1.53 applications made to Professional Doctorate qualifications resulted in an offer. However, the proportion of applications to offers was notably high in 2008/09 where more than two applications were submitted per offer made (2.45). As shown in Table 2.2 in section 2.4, for Professional Doctorates, the ratio of applications to places taken up for was also particularly high in that year. In 2011/12, the number of applications to Professional Doctorates were submitted per offer made was in line with the average across the period (1.51).

### 7.3.2. Application to offer ratio by detailed qualification type (PGT)

Table 7.2 shows the ratio of applications to offers according to specific qualification type within PGT programmes.

**Table 7.2: Ratio of applications to offers by qualification type (PGT)**

			Qualification type		
	Base: HEIs	Base: Applications	Masters Degrees	MBA's	Postgraduate diplomas and certificates
<b>2005/06</b>	6	43,754	1.81	1.38	1.15
<b>2006/07</b>		50,823	1.86	1.47	1.14
<b>2007/08</b>		59,793	1.91	1.53	1.17
<b>2008/09</b>	12	125,757	1.91	2.07	1.26
<b>2009/10</b>		148,938	1.92	2.25	1.32
<b>2010/11</b>	18	217,375	1.72	1.63	1.28
<b>2011/12</b>		219,705	1.70	1.53	1.30

In comparison with PGR programmes, the ratio of applications to offers for PGT study was generally more consistent within qualification type. On average, across the period, the ratio of applications to offers was 1.8:1 for Masters degrees, 1.7:1 to MBAs and 1.2:1 for postgraduate certificates and diplomas. The ratio of applications to Masters degrees fluctuated between 1.7:1 and 1:9, and between 1.1:1 and 1.3:1 for Postgraduate diplomas and certificates. A slightly higher degree of fluctuation occurred for MBAs; at its least competitive 1.4 applications were received to every offer, and 2.3:1 at its most competitive.

Table 7.2 indicates a general increase in the proportionate number of applications received per offer up until 2009/10. However in 2010/11 and 2011/12, a slight decline in the proportion of applications received is evident across all three qualification types.

## 7.4. Application to offer ratio by Subject

### 7.4.1. Application to offer ratio by Subject (PGR)

Taken as an average across the seven year period, the most competitive subject area with the highest proportion of applications received per offer was Business/Administrative studies. Since 2005/06, on average, 5.11 applications were received for every offer made. Submissions to Social / Political / Economic studies were almost as competitive, with an average ratio of 4.68 applications to every place. However, in the most recent year (2011/12), the most competitive subject area was Law; 5.89 applications were received for every offer made.

Relative to the proportion of applications received, the highest numbers of offers were made to candidates applying to study Creative arts / design; overall 1.54 applications were received to every offer made.

Table 7.3 below shows the number of PGR applications for each offer made by subject over time.

**Table 7.3: Ratio of applications to offers received by Subject Area (PGR)**

	Ratio of applications to offers						
	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
<i>Base: HEIs</i>	6		11			16	
<i>Base: Applications</i>	5,282	6,563	7,639	25,658	30,368	44,688	49,136
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>	1.15	1.83	1.72	3.08	1.56	1.62	1.69
<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1.58	2.93	2.18	2.48	2.52	1.73	1.90
<b>Biological Sciences</b>	1.67	2.86	3.10	2.52	2.29	3.05	3.16

	Ratio of applications to offers						
	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1.85	1.60	4.00	1.81	1.28	1.25	1.27
<b>Chemistry</b>	1.79	2.84	2.55	2.23	2.16	2.49	2.71
<b>Physics</b>	1.87	2.46	2.41	3.05	2.79	3.39	3.37
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	1.33	2.60	2.41	2.39	2.54	3.03	3.59
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3.45	2.86	2.85	3.17	3.02	3.42	3.34
<b>Computer science / librarianship</b>	4.48	4.61	5.85	3.68	3.44	2.87	2.93
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	1.64	1.75	1.96	2.23	2.05	1.99	2.08
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	4.92	5.43	4.59	4.18	4.28	4.48	4.91
<b>Law</b>	4.30	3.48	4.41	4.21	4.24	4.30	5.89
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	4.28	6.03	6.10	5.79	4.71	4.19	4.66
<b>Languages</b>	1.80	2.02	2.00	2.03	1.77	1.94	2.08
<b>Humanities</b>	1.85	2.17	1.76	2.07	1.76	1.82	2.09
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1.15	1.65	1.66	1.68	1.49	1.52	
<b>Education</b>	2.33	2.41	2.12	2.12	1.91	1.91	2.10
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	1.14	1.33	#	2.54	2.44	2.75	2.76

Across the seven years, the ratio of applications to offers made was very consistent in some subject areas; for instance, Languages, Humanities and Creative / Arts design.



However some subjects appear to have become increasingly competitive over time notably Physics, Other Physical Science and Law.

#### 7.4.2. Application to offer ratio by Subject (PGT)

Taken as an average across the 7 year period, the PGT subject area with the highest proportion of applications received per offer made was Mathematical Sciences. Since 2005/06, overall 3.17 applications were received for every offer made, and a significantly high proportion of applications were made in 2007/08 (5.06 submissions per offer).

The lowest application to offer ratios were seen for Chemistry and Education; over the whole 7 year period, 1.37 applications for Chemistry and 1.28 applications for Education were received per offer for each of these subjects.

Furthermore, as with PGR applications, a proportionately small number of applications did not result in an offer of a place for Veterinary Sciences / Agriculture / Related Subjects. Across the seven year period, overall 1.46 applications were received per offer and this ratio was as low as 1.12 in the most recent academic year (2011/12).

Table 7.4 indicates that with the exception of Mathematical Sciences, year on year, the ratio of PGT applications to offers fluctuates far less than submissions to PGR courses.

**Table 7.4: Ratio of applications to offers by Subject Area (PGT)**

	Ratio of applications to offers						
	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
<i>Base: HEIs</i>	6			12		18	
<i>Base: Applications</i>	43,754	50,823	59,793	125,757	148,938	217,375	219,705
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>	1.97	2.97	3.67	2.13	2.29	1.73	1.60
<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1.44	1.38	1.40	1.90	1.85	1.64	1.68
<b>Biological Sciences</b>	1.57	1.52	1.47	1.68	1.71	1.70	1.68
<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1.57	1.70	1.48	1.60	1.55	1.19	1.12
<b>Chemistry</b>	1.33	1.28	1.27	1.39	1.51	1.43	1.37
<b>Physics</b>	3.04	1.00	1.12	1.53	1.31	1.71	2.00
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	1.33	1.35	1.35	1.55	1.50	1.44	1.53

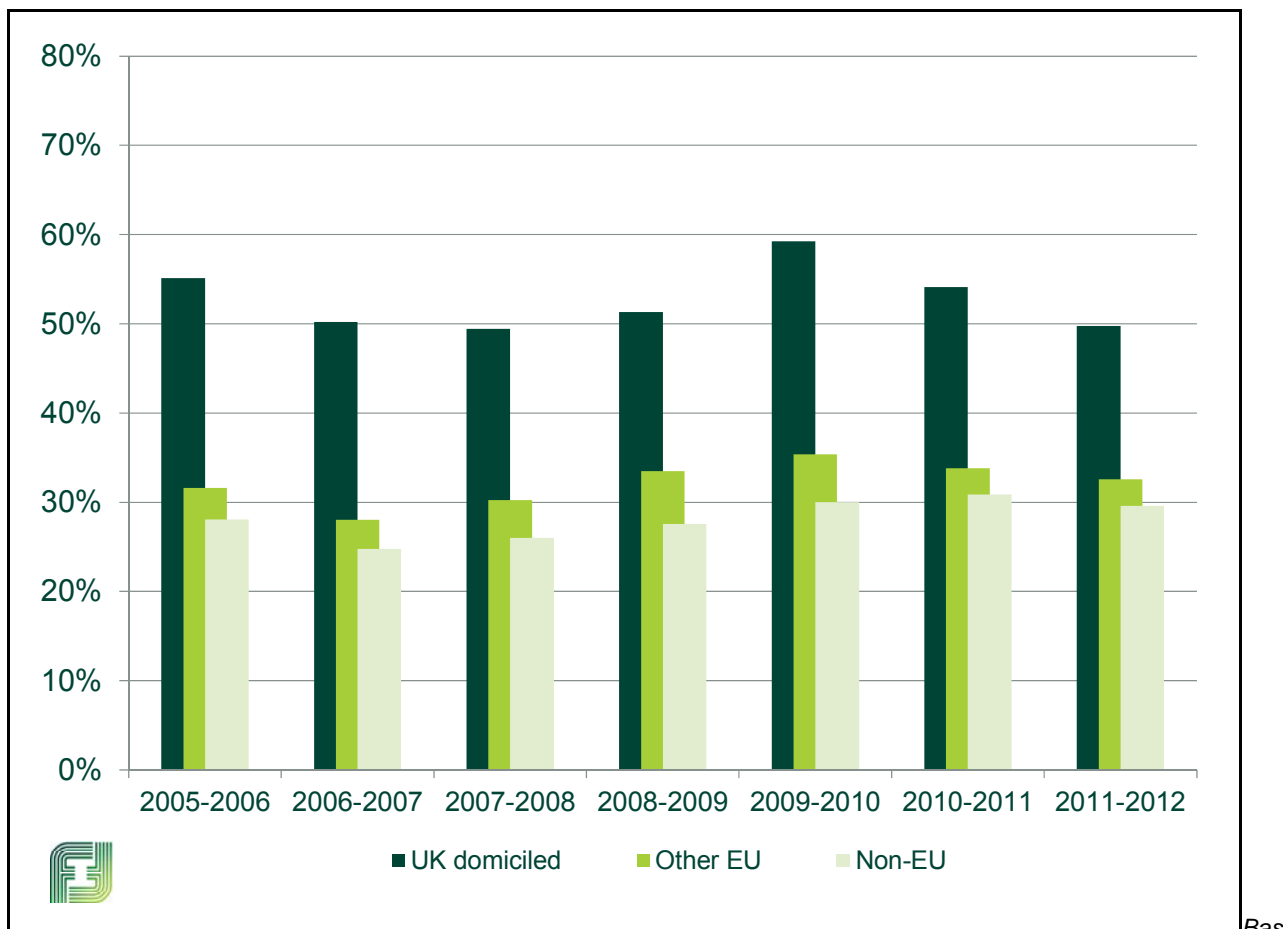
	Ratio of applications to offers						
	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2.79	3.07	5.06	3.16	2.60	2.72	2.80
<b>Computer science / librarianship</b>	1.90	1.88	2.05	1.72	1.81	1.64	1.64
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	1.43	1.50	1.52	1.59	1.54	1.38	1.33
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	2.51	2.57	2.56	2.40	2.47	2.15	2.11
<b>Law</b>	1.67	1.82	1.96	1.65	1.79	1.61	1.68
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	1.65	1.72	1.81	2.06	2.09	1.81	1.76
<b>Languages</b>	1.51	1.40	1.50	1.48	1.69	1.40	1.40
<b>Humanities</b>	1.47	1.57	1.67	1.64	1.66	1.55	1.56
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1.23	1.21	1.38	1.51	1.54	1.62	1.69
<b>Education</b>	1.21	1.25	1.24	1.40	1.29	1.26	1.29
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	1.08	1.00	-	1.40	1.43	1.29	1.22

## 7.5. Application to offer ratio by Domicile

### 7.5.1. Application to offer ratio by Domicile (PGR)

Over half (53%) of PGR applications made by UK domiciled applicants between 2005/06 and 2011/12 resulted in an offer of a place to study. Approximately a third (32%) of applications submitted by other EU applicants were successful and slightly less than a third (28%) of applications submitted by non-EU candidates were successful.

Figure 7.3 overleaf shows the proportion of applications resulting in an offer by domicile for each of the application years.

**Figure 7.3: Percentage of applications resulting in an offer by Domicile (PGR)**

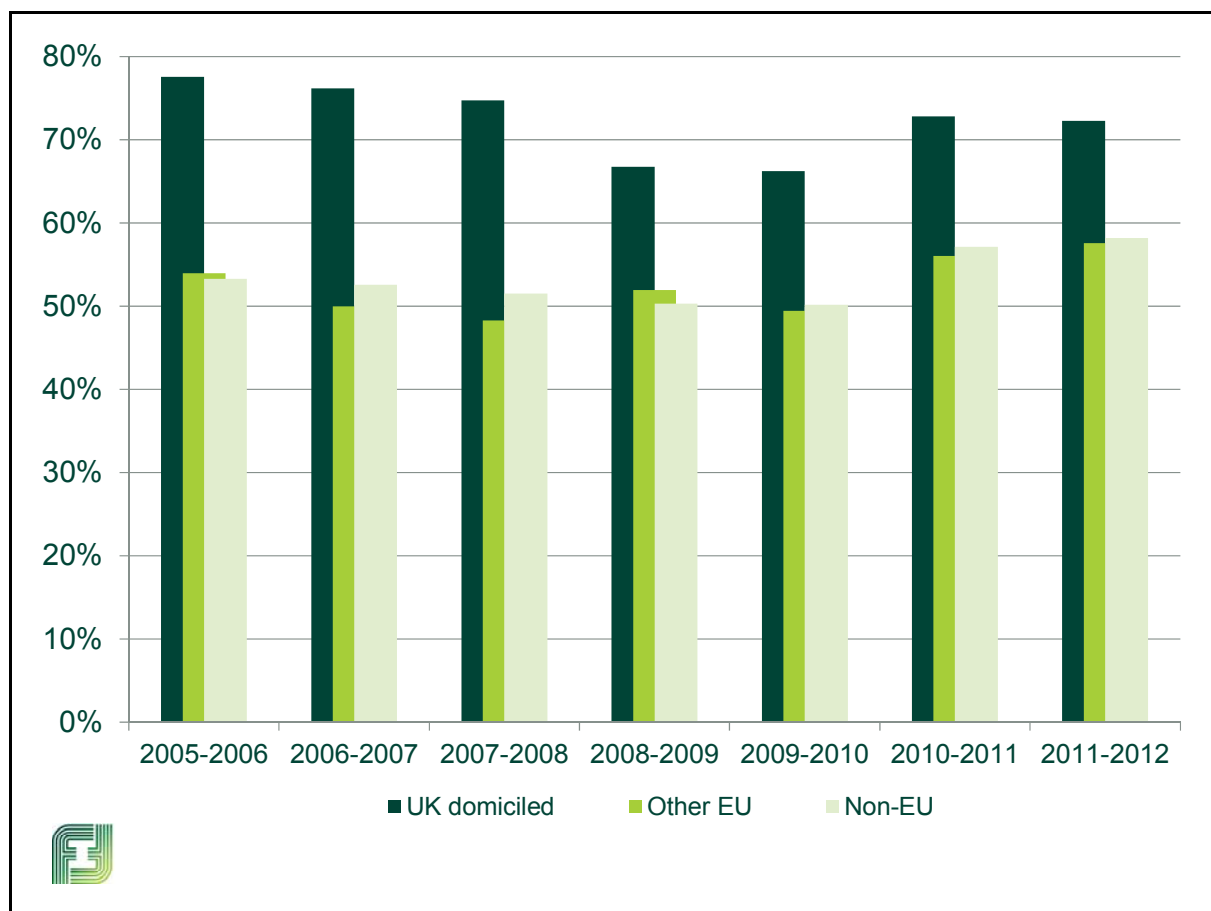
e: All applications to PGR programmes with offer status and domicile supplied (168,023)  
 (05/06: 5,269), (06/07: 6,543), (07/08: 7,592), (08/09: 25,507), (09/10: 30,243), (10/11: 44,223), (11/12: 48,646)  
 Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 6), (08/09 – 09/10: 10), (10/11 – 11/12: 16)

The proportion of successful applications did not fluctuate greatly from year to year for either other EU or non-EU candidates. For applications from non-EU Candidates, the proportion of applications resulting in an offer ranged between 25% and 31%. For applications from other EU candidates, the proportion ranged between 28% and 35%. However success rates varied more for UK candidates; in 2009/10 59% of PGR applications were successful in comparison with 49% in 2011/12.

### 7.5.2. Application to offer ratio by Domicile (PGT)

Approximately seven in ten (71%) of applications from UK domiciled applicants to PGT study made between 2005/06 and 2011/12 resulted in an offer of a place to study. Overall, over half of applications submitted by non-EU (54%) and other EU applicants (52%) were successful.

Figure 7.4 below shows the variation in the proportion of PGT applications resulting in an offer being made by domicile.

**Figure 7.4: Percentage of applications resulting in an offer by Domicile (PGT)**

Base:

All applications to PGT programmes with offer status and domicile supplied (856,798)

(05/06: 42,991), (06/07: 49,977), (07/08: 58,694), (08/09: 124,264), (09/10: 147,431), (10/11: 215,498), (11/12: 217,943)

Participating HEIs: (05/06 – 07/08: 7), (08/09 – 09/10: 12), (10/11 – 11/12: 18)

As Figure 7.4 indicates, there was a marked decline in the proportion of applications submitted by UK domiciled candidates that led to an offer in 2008/09, with 67% resulting in an offer compared with 75% in the previous year. In the latter part of the period, the proportion of applications resulting in an offer increased again to 73% in 2010/11 and 72% in 2011/12, although it did not quite reach the level seen at the beginning of the period (78% in 2005/6).

In 2011/12 proportionate number of offers submitted by EU and Non-EU candidates peaked; in both cases just less than six in ten (58%) applications resulted in an offer of a place to study.

# Chapter 8: Postgraduate Demand in the Future

**This chapter provides some qualitative information collected during the site visits to HEIs. While these site visits focussed primarily on checking the application data that had been provided and discussing the trends that it appeared to show, time was also spent exploring HEIs' views on how the demand for postgraduate study might change in the future. In addition, HEIs were encouraged to discuss the amount of work involved in participating in the study and any steps that could be taken to minimise this if the exercise were to be repeated in the future. Also included are recommendations from the researchers about collating postgraduate data in the future.**

## 8.1. Postgraduate demand in the future

While demand for postgraduate study has increased in recent years, the HEIs who shared their application data for this project all expressed concern about the future of postgraduate study in the UK. Although many felt that the impact of 2006 increases in undergraduate fees on the demand for postgraduate study had been quite slight (at least at an overall level), there was a general consensus that the effect of £9,000 fees introduced in Autumn 2012 will be much more heavily felt<sup>26</sup>.

HEIs were concerned that graduates will be acquiring higher levels of debt as a result of fee increases at undergraduate level and that this will result in a lack of willingness to take on the expense of postgraduate study.

*“This prospect of having that loan and then finding £4000, £5000 for fees plus living expenses for Postgraduate is probably going to be unreachable for a fair proportion of our Undergraduate students who might think about progressing.”*

Furthermore, some HEIs participating in the study also expressed scepticism that the present fee cap will remain at £9,000 and were concerned that tuition fees may be increased even further in the future (with a corresponding knock-on impact on demand for postgraduate study).

HEIs felt that the impact of undergraduate fee increases is likely to have a particularly significant impact in the context of the current economic climate and the purported reduction in available fiscal support offered by the Research Councils discussed in Chapter 1. Some HEIs felt that the reduction of funding available (in conjunction with a

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<sup>26</sup> Any impact will be felt from the academic year 2015/16 onwards (as the earliest point at which the vast majority of undergraduates entering study in 2012/13 academic year could have proceeded to a postgraduate course).

lack of a standardised loan system -akin to that available at undergraduate level - available for postgraduates) would have as big an impact on postgraduate demand as the increased level of undergraduate fees. One of the participating HEIs currently undertakes follow-up surveys with candidates who are offered a place to study but do not accept the offer. They have found that over 50% of such applicants turned down their place because they could not secure the relevant finances.

There is some indication that Russell Group universities feel that they are better positioned to weather the impact of the higher undergraduate fee regime than other HEIs, at least in terms of sustaining absolute numbers of applications received. HEIs in the Russell Group feel that their more established links to industry partners and greater access to bursaries and sponsorships will help them to sustain demand for postgraduate study (particularly for Research courses and more specifically STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics] subjects).

### Widening participation

Most HEIs raised concerns about the impact that increased undergraduate fees might have on the widening participation agenda in postgraduate study. A number of HEIs were anxious that the 2012/13 fee regime may threaten the number of applications submitted by candidates of lower socio-economic groups and that postgraduate study may become increasingly elitist.

However, as mentioned earlier in this report, very few HEIs collected data that would make it possible to monitor the socio-economic status of postgraduate applicants and this will make it difficult to assess whether this fear comes to pass. HEIs also mentioned being unsure about what sort of information would be appropriate to collect with the use of information on parental background or schooling feeling less appropriate in the context of postgraduate applicants than for undergraduate applicants.

### Demographics

Some of the HEIs participating in the study suggested that the average age of postgraduate applicants is likely to increase in the future. They felt that the cumulative expense of proceeding straight from undergraduate to postgraduate study is more likely to deter younger graduates, and as a result a higher proportion of applications are likely to be received from professional candidates already mid-career in future years. Some HEIs suggested that gaps between completing an undergraduate course and embarking on postgraduate study of around 5-6 years (or even longer) might become more normal.

Yet in contrast, some HEIs argued that the age profile of applicants is likely to remain relatively static at least while economic recovery remains weak. They suggested for every young person deterred from postgraduate study by increasing debt, another is likely to opt to remain in higher education due to the lack of available career opportunities (enabling them to improve career prospects and/or delay entering the job market).

### Subject choice

Among HEIs there was a widespread belief that postgraduate study in Arts and Humanities subjects will be particularly susceptible to the impact of increased undergraduate fees. Generally they felt that postgraduate study in these subject areas (and particularly for Taught Masters courses) was more likely to be driven by personal

interest, rather than a focus on enhancing career development. Additionally, in comparison with STEM subjects, significantly fewer bursaries and sponsorships were available to support undertaking qualifications in the Arts and Humanities (and fewer employer-funded opportunities were felt to be available). HEIs felt that greater financial pressure on potential students would make them more likely to feel unable to justify the return on investment of an Arts or Humanities course.

The courses that HEIs felt are least likely to be affected in the future are vocational courses with a strong link to particular employers or sectors. Government subsidised / paid courses such as those offered in conjunction with the NHS have seen strong growth in recent years and some HEIs were optimistic that the interest in this type of course will continue to grow. Several HEIs mentioned that they are pro-actively endeavouring to further develop their links with industry and private providers to ensure this growth.

Most HEIs also made the point that if applications from UK students are reduced as a result of the new undergraduate fee regime, then it is likely that their distribution of students by subject will be more heavily influenced by the subject preferences of international students. They mentioned that their international students tend to be particularly concentrated in subjects such as Business and Management Skills as well as the STEM subjects and these subjects may account for a greater proportion of their offer in future for this reason as well.

### Qualification type

There was less consensus on the impact that the changing fee regime and other developments might have on the types of qualifications that postgraduate students choose to study for. Generally HEIs seemed to suspect that any changes in application trends will be more apparent by subject than by qualification type.

However, some HEIs indicated that they are anticipating a decline in applications to Masters courses, as compared to PhDs for example, it can be harder to prove the direct impact on career prospects. A representative from one HEI commented;

*“There has been a recent shift in fundamental philosophy from, ‘education is there for education’s sake’ and for becoming a more developed individual to, ‘education is there to get you a job.’ In that case, there’s a far more deliberate weighing up of options, and you have to question whether Masters courses can survive in that.”*

On the other hand, some felt that Masters qualifications might start to look good value for money, when judged against the increased cost of studying at Undergraduate level.

MBA's are amongst those qualifications most likely to be sponsored by an employer and so HEIs felt that demand for these qualifications was least likely to be impacted by changes to the undergraduate fee regime. In many HEIs a high proportion of MBAs were undertaken by international students and hence for this reason as well HEIs felt that they would not be affected by changes in undergraduate fees specifically.

## Part-time / Full Time

There was a divergence of opinion among HEIs as to how demand for part-time and full time courses might change in the future. A slight majority of HEIs participating in the study suggested that the proportion of part-time applications would increase in the wake of the 2012/13 fee changes. These HEIs felt that the fee increases would result to a higher proportion of applications from older candidates who are more likely to be looking to fit study around their career and family lives. Some HEIs also anticipated an increased demand for online courses or distance learning packages as they result in lower living costs for students.

On the other hand, a slightly smaller proportion of HEIs argued that the balance could shift more towards full-time study. Some of those anticipating that the future might see a greater proportion of international students felt this would be the case (since these students are more likely to study full-time). Others felt that a greater shift towards full-time study might be the case if an increasing proportion of applicants are on vocational courses sponsored by an employer. These HEIs felt that businesses generally prefer employees to complete a qualification within a quick turnaround (and hence prefer full-time over part-time study).

## Candidate quality

HEIs expressed different views about how the new undergraduate fee regime will affect the quality of postgraduate applicants.

Generally, HEIs agreed that if volumes of applications fell in the way that they anticipated then it was likely that the 'conversion rate' (i.e. the proportion of applications that result in a place being taken up) would increase in order to try to maintain student numbers. However there were varying views on the impact that this might have on the quality of postgraduate students.

Russell Group universities were particularly inclined to state that the quality of students would not change because they already received applications from far more high quality candidates than they are able to offer places to. They stressed that their standards and entry criteria would always be upheld; even if application numbers fell.

Some other HEIs felt that it might be possible for conversion rates to increase in the future without this meaning a fall in the quality of students if the issues of higher undergraduate fees and reduced funding meant that it was less committed or lower quality applications that were impacted most. They felt that if decisions to embark on postgraduate study became more carefully considered then it would be more likely to be applicants with genuine interest or talent in a subject that applied to continue their studies.

Others felt that they would be likely to have to accept lower quality applicants in order to maintain viable student numbers. There were already indications that HEIs have been testing measures to adjust entry requirements to increase applications/student numbers, arguably at the expense of quality. For a short period, one HEI had made the entry requirements for one of its postgraduate courses less stringent for existing undergraduate students, although this idea was revoked when it was clear that student aptitude was being comprised.



## International students

Most HEIs suggested that, in the absence of other policy changes, the increase in undergraduate fees would lead to a greater proportion of postgraduate applications coming from overseas students. However, they felt that this picture was likely to be complicated by other changes that will impact international students at the same time.

HEIs tended to feel that the UK dependency on international applicants was precarious. They felt that the UK education system still benefitted from an impressive international reputation but felt that changing visa restrictions were already starting to have a considerable deterrent effect on levels of applications from overseas candidates. Most notably, HEIs cited the introduction of the points based visa system alongside the abolition of the post-study work visa (April 2012) as working to dissuade potential international candidates. They cited examples of negative coverage of these changes in the international media (particularly in India). Some HEIs mentioned that they had noticed these changes shifting the balance of their applications between countries (noting that Chinese students were less likely to be looking to work in the UK after study than those from countries such as India or Bangladesh for example meaning that applications from China had held up better).

In the wake of these changes, HEIs predicted that the UK will face increasing competition from abroad. They felt that places such as Holland, the US, Germany and Australia facilitated cheaper study options, more flexible visas and might generally be perceived as offering more appealing packages; particularly those offering the opportunity to work after graduating.

Some HEIs also mentioned that variations in currency exchange rates can have quite big increases in the costs of postgraduate study and hence in levels of applications.

All-in-all the number of factors impacting on international applications made it very difficult for HEIs to predict how the balance between domestic and international applications might change in the future. However all were in agreement that there was potential for both domestic and international applications to drop (albeit in response to different policy changes) and that this could have a very serious impact on the postgraduate sector.

## HEI response

Some HEIs had already started to implement strategies to address their concerns about future demand, or were planning to introduce them.

Some had introduced committees or appointed individuals to assess how best to respond to the changing landscape and market postgraduate courses most effectively.

Several HEIs had expanded, or were looking to expand, their provision of part-time and flexible learning options. Some HEIs had simply extended part-time study options to a more extensive range of courses or subjects area; others had established ways to facilitate distance learning such as the introduction of “online delivery colleges”.

Alongside this, many HEIs had looked at measures to actively encourage existing undergraduate students to proceed directly to postgraduate study at the organisation. To boost retention, some HEIs offered or were considering discounts or “loyalty bursaries” to existing students considering extending their studies.

HEIs had also developed a number of other strategies to try to assist postgraduate students with funding their courses. These included:

- **Active promotion and marketing of available funding opportunities** such as scholarships or bursaries
- The **introduction of “lump-sum” payments** based on the existing US model. This enables students who prefer to do so to pay for the entire cost of the course in a single payment.
- **Developing new industry partnerships** who may offer sponsorship to some students, as well as employment opportunities in a bid to compensate for the reduction in Research Councils funding.
- Implementing systems whereby **select bursary allocations are pooled together** and divided in a manner that enables greater equity of opportunity to a higher number of applicants.
- **Enabling applicants to study towards (and pay for) selective modules**, rather than a full qualification
- Developing **reciprocal arrangements with International HEIs** enabling students to study for a year of their PhD in the UK and receive a qualification from two universities (at a decreased cost of studying for four years overseas).

Reflecting the big role that funding can have in decisions about whether or not to take up an offer of a place for postgraduate study, one HEI was in the process of exploring options to ascertain whether funding decisions can be brought forward in the application process to give them greater certainty in the volume of places likely to be taken up.

More generally, most HEIs had implemented or were looking to implement strategies to more actively market their postgraduate opportunities. Marketing campaigns mentioned included adverts on websites, billboards, newspapers and television are being specifically developed to try and appeal to a greater number of UK undergraduates.

HEIs were focussing on developing strategies to emphasise the positive return on investment in postgraduate study. Many HEIs have introduced marketing and recruitment campaigns to stress the benefits of attaining a postgraduate qualification; usually by highlighting postgraduates' increased employability and publicising postgraduate alumni “destinations”. In a similar vein, other HEIs have attempted to increase the perceived value of their courses by incorporating personal development modules and opportunities to undertake internships into their programmes.

There was some debate about how the cost of postgraduate study should be presented in marketing material. Some HEIs have deliberately promoted the comparatively low cost of studying for (some) postgraduate qualifications, in comparison with undergraduate courses. On the other hand, some organisations were more cautious in adopting this approach, suggesting that this tack may indicate postgraduate study is of lower quality/value.

*“With £9000 undergraduate fees, people are going to ask, ‘Why is a PGT £2,900?’ You have to say one of them is not right. There’s no way you can argue consistently for both of them.”*

## Repeating the data collation exercise

Positively, in the absence of any centralised source of information about postgraduate applications, HEIs that participated in the data collation exercise shared a view that investigation to understand demand for postgraduate study was welcomed. As such, despite the challenges faced in producing their data sets, nearly all HEIs stated that, at least in principle, they would be willing to participate in future exercises to further explore change in postgraduate demand.

There is also suggestion that five HEIs who were not asked to share their data (on the basis that they only held very recent application records or very incomplete data) would have been willing to provide their data if their involvement had been requested. These HEIs had expressed interest in the project from the offset, participated in the site visit to discuss their application database and stated that they were, at least in principle, happy to share their data. Should future exercises benefit from their input, it is likely that these HEIs would be willing to accommodate similar requests.

Yet, it is worth noting that out of the 24 HEIs that were initially asked to provide their data for this study, four declined to participate.

- In two instances this was due to a lack of available resource which could be dedicated to the exercise and the cumbersome nature of their application system.
- One HEI was unwilling to participate because of concerns about data protection issues and releasing commercially sensitive information.
- The final HEI did not provide a specific reason for their refusal.

Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 1 Scottish HEIs exhibited a lower level of interest in the research than English HEIs and a decision was made to exclude them from the data collection stage of the project. Aforementioned, Scottish HEIs appeared to be less engaged in the project than English institutions; on completion of the initial online exercise, only one Scottish university out of nine was keen to participate at the initial site visit stage. This would seem to indicate that a greater level of promotion or persuasion would be required to secure enough interest from Scottish HEIs for their data to be included in a future exercise.

### **HEI feedback on data collation exercise**

It is clear that experiences were varied among those HEIs that submitted their application databases for the project. In the main, the amount of time and resource required to provide the data was determined by the sophistication of the application database in use. Some institutions were able to automatically extract data and comply with the specification with relative ease. Conversely, other HEIs stated that complying with the request took days of work; one institution estimated that the cost of the exercise had been £1,500 to the institution. In some cases, several systems (for example archives or registration information) had to be interrogated in order to produce the single data set. A minority had

to combine information obtained from paper applications with those submitted via online methods. Some HEIs had run similar analyses for their own internal purposes, others had relatively little experience of reviewing their own applications data.

Some HEIs could provide the required information in a matter of days where for example one member of staff was able to extract the required data from an automated system. Conversely one institution, dependent on a relatively basic application system, had to recruit a temporary member of staff to input data manually; information was uploaded in batches as and when they were completed over the course of several weeks. Moreover, the resource required to undertake the exercise was often difficult for HEIs to predict at the start of the project which caused some issues for internal resource planning.

### ***Contractor feedback***

Generally the quality and completeness of data provided by the participating HEIs was good, although it was a relatively time-consuming process to collate, clean and compile the data to produce a single standardised data set.

After initial data was received, a rigorous checking process was conducted on a HEI by HEI basis. This was necessary to ensure that the specification had been interpreted correctly and enabled the contractor to highlight any omissions or apparent errors in the data.

The most common issues to arise were:

- HEIs providing data pertaining to applicants' year of intended study, rather than providing all applications submitted within a given academic year
- Use of institution-based coding mechanisms (and sometimes different coding frames for different years of study) for some data (typically relating to Previous HEI field)

Typically these issues were resolved through telephone and email correspondence, and in some more complex cases, via face to face contact at the follow up site visits. If possible, where errors were identified, the HEI then uploaded amended or supplementary data. Alternatively, sometimes an explanation of internal coding systems was all that was required.

In addition to issues around the content of the databases, imposing a timetable on the study was difficult. With no obligation to participate, it was often difficult for HEIs to prioritise extraction of application data. In some cases, HEIs had to be repeatedly contacted and deadlines were extended several times which caused delays to the extensive checking stage and subsequently to the overall project timetable.

In the case of some HEIs quite a long period of time elapsed from delivery of the initial file to delivery of a corrected file. The length of time taken appeared to depend largely on the sophistication of the individual HEIs' system, the extent of the queries and any resourcing issues faced by the institution. Some HEIs were able to respond within a few days of receiving the queries; other took up to four weeks to deliver amended data. In part, this was determined by the onsite presence of a single point of contact and, during the summer

period, it was more difficult to resolve queries due to the high prevalence of contacts on annual leave.

### Recommendations on analysing postgraduate demand in the future

Analysis of application data would obviously be much easier and of much greater robustness if there were a centralised system for postgraduate applications akin to the UCAS system for undergraduate study. Assuming that a portal of this nature is unlikely to be established in the near future, then it will only be possible to conduct analysis of applications data by obtaining information direct from HEIs.

On this basis, it might be worth further exploring a couple of options in advance of any future data collection exercise. These include:

- Working with some of the large providers of student records management databases. A number of HEIs use 'off the shelf' packages and there are two or three market leaders. These systems tend to use standardised data fields even if the user interface is customised to the requirements of an individual HEI. It seems possible that some of these providers would be able to write a programme that the HEIs using their systems could run to extract data relatively quickly. This option was explored in the feasibility stage to this project with one provider however they felt that they would need to consult with the institutions using their system before being willing to consider this and the timeframes for the project did not really allow for this. It might be worth revisiting this again in advance of any future exercise (from the perspective of both the provider's capacity to develop this programme and user institutions' willingness to run it).
- Discussing with the HEIs that only hold one or two years' worth of applications data whether they would be willing to retain more records or perhaps to transfer their data to BIS prior to its destruction. Otherwise, if this exercise is repeated after an interval of more than two years, some of the HEIs that took part in this exercise will have a gap in their time series data.

If the exercise were to be repeated in a similar format again, then it we would recommend the following:

- HEIs are again only asked to provide **anonymised data**. While this limits some of the analysis potential of the data collected, levels of participation in the exercise would have been considerably lower if they had been asked to share attributed data.
- HEIs should be provided with as much **advance warning** as possible – maybe even up to 6 months, to enable institutions to prepare and plan necessary resource requirements;
- Deadlines for delivery of data factor in some HEIs not being able to meet the deadline due to unexpected resourcing difficulties and will also need to allow a lot of **time for resolution of queries** about initial datasets;

- The **site visits and supporting detailed data reports are retained** as part of the project (these were very useful for identifying errors/omissions in the data provided and the data report provided analysis that some institutions felt would be valuable for their own purposes which may have helped to secure their buy-in to any future exercise).
- A **degree of flexibility in the data specification** is necessary. In some cases, in order to secure access to the data it was necessary for some data to be taken in a non-standardised way and to be edited/coded by the research contractor. There was a consensus among HEIs that requirements should not be too prescriptive given that they are under no obligation to participate.
- Again ensuring that **standardised documentation on data security, data protection and the potential uses of the data is agreed in advance**. Most HEIs requested to see at least some of this documentation. Some HEIs felt that they would find it more reassuring to receive this type of documentation directly from BIS rather than from a research contractor.

# Appendix I: Volumetric tables

The figures presented below are weighted data for all tables and charts in the report that present data proportionally. The absolute number below should be treated as indicative only. Unweighted bases are provided for reference.

## Chapter 2

### Applications by qualification type

PGR	Base: Participating HEIs	Base	PhDs	Professional doctorates	Research masters
2005-2006	6	5,282	90,334	1,544	21,738
2006-2007		6,563	107,758	2,040	19,478
2007-2008		7,639	128,154	2,255	18,606
2008-2009	10	25,658	161,237	4,017	20,040
2009-2010		30,368	190,290	6,326	23,866
2010-2011	17	51,478	158,073	5,115	17,146
2011-2012		56,741	170,060	6,842	19,965

PGT	Base: Participating HEIs	Base	Masters degrees	MBA	PG Diplomas & Certificates
2005-2006	7	43,754	447,962	19,236	25,361
2006-2007		50,823	511,353	25,390	27,351
2007-2008		59,793	605,055	28,604	36,319
2008-2009	13	126,412	926,708	39,400	47,549
2009-2010		149,930	1,122,834	40,963	55,995
2010-2011	20	250,173	1,199,324	31,685	56,839
2011-2012		252,754	1,206,167	33,173	63,272

### Applications by mode of study

PGR	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012
Base: Participating HEIs	6		10		17		
Base	5,282	6,563	7,639	25,658	30,368	51,478	56,637
Full-time	108,207	123,946	141,404	178,165	208,788	170,546	186,536
Part-time	5,249	5,180	7,481	6,955	11,340	8,931	9,522
Other	160	150	130	173	354	861	605

PGT	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7		13		20		
<i>Base</i>	43,754	50,823	59,792	126,412	149,930	250,164	252,754
<b>Full-time</b>	437,899	503,341	595,517	920,210	1,109,295	1,188,270	1,199,173
<b>Part-time</b>	50,250	55,493	69,393	81,891	98,590	87,720	89,280
<b>Other</b>	4,409	4,960	5,057	11,555	11,907	11,796	14,159

### Mode of study according to specific qualification type (Full Time / Part Time / Other)

PGR	<i>Base HEIs</i>	<i>Base</i>	PhDs			Professional doctorates			Research masters		
			FT	PT	Other	FT	PT	Other	FT	PT	Other
<b>2005-2006</b>	6	5,282	85,588	4,596	150	965	569	10	21,654	84	0
<b>2006-2007</b>		6,563	10,3432	4,186	140	1,150	890	0	19,364	104	10
<b>2007-2008</b>		7,639	121,538	6,486	130	1,460	795	0	18,406	200	0
<b>2008-2009</b>	10	25,658	155,483	5,587	167	2,927	1,082	7	19,754	285	0
<b>2009-2010</b>		30,368	182,157	7,833	300	3,156	3,157	13	23,475	351	40
<b>2010-2011</b>	17	54,478	151,223	6,397	452	2,750	2,074	292	16,573	454	118
<b>2011-2012</b>		56,636	163,475	6,428	158	3,816	2,475	340	19,243	615	108

PGT	<i>Base HEIs</i>	<i>Base</i>	Masters degrees			MBAs			PG dips & certs		
			FT	PT	Other	FT	PT	Other	FT	PT	Other
<b>2005-2006</b>	7	43,754	415,540	29,299	7,951	14,408	3,736	1,093	7,951	17,216	193
<b>2006-2007</b>		50,823	473,600	34,253	9,935	19,806	4,346	1,238	9,935	16,894	222
<b>2007-2008</b>		59,792	557,695	43,666	14,768	23,054	4,341	1,209	14,768	21,386	164
<b>2008-2009</b>	13	126,412	860,857	58,637	23,097	36,256	2,684	460	23,097	20,570	3,882
<b>2009-2010</b>		149,930	1,046,975	67,890	25,892	36,428	4,289	247	25,892	26,411	3,692
<b>2010-2011</b>	20	250,164	1,134,224	56,065	26,158	27,889	3,640	157	26,158	28,016	2,664
<b>2011-2012</b>		252,754	1,143,474	52,221	29,264	26,435	6,660	78	29,264	30,399	3,609



## Chapter 3

### Applications by subject area

PGR	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10		17	
<i>Base</i>	5,282	6,563	7,639	25,658	30,368	51,480	56,743
<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	995	1,515	2,035	6,198	9,005	6,918	7,723
<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	402	349	509	5,082	8,107	8,247	11,175
<b>Biological sciences</b>	4,188	7,878	11,268	10,300	12,436	16,748	17,051
<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	370	160	160	955	1,167	655	620
<b>Chemistry</b>	1,624	2,345	2,395	2,977	3,709	4,513	4,871
<b>Physics</b>	1,512	1,760	1,335	2,752	2,974	2,509	3,006
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	2,265	4,434	5,557	4,511	5,482	7,391	8,187
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3,883	4,129	5,123	6,148	5,755	5,738	5,632
<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	4,905	5,993	6,602	6,507	7,821	7,434	7,793
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	11,823	15,495	17,627	21,516	26,224	22,374	25,972
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	54,871	52,813	58,139	55,176	63,295	42,118	44,735
<b>Law</b>	5,608	6,327	7,357	7,712	7,711	6,085	7,253
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	11,032	15,111	16,503	20,999	24,082	18,992	19,895
<b>Languages</b>	1,947	2,857	3,511	7,484	9,398	7,020	7,628
<b>Humanities</b>	5,497	4,333	6,070	9,088	12,483	9,264	10,106
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1,029	1,412	1,622	2,240	3,060	2,451	2,885
<b>Education</b>	1,409	2,237	3,160	4,201	4,887	4,602	5,346
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	256	128	42	11,447	12,886	7,288	7,002

PGT	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
<i>Base</i>	43,754	50,823	59,793	126,412	149,930	250,173	262,754
<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	570	1,501	1,997	36,319	45,350	25,339	28,065
<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	12,538	12,214	18,495	51,152	62,916	50,494	54,877
<b>Biological sciences</b>	14,763	16,069	21,399	23,846	23,700	32,561	28,895
<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	4,504	5,068	4,629	7,341	7,433	7,271	6,354
<b>Chemistry</b>	2,302	2,895	4,290	5,472	5,067	4,793	4,645
<b>Physics</b>	76	76	228	158	673	1,255	1,874
<b>Other physical sciences</b>	16,106	18,271	22,891	23,975	26,610	28,493	27,175
<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	9,689	11,465	17,619	21,637	31,984	31,090	30,280
<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	27,663	28,278	30,230	60,561	72,930	71,013	70,060
<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	50,500	62,246	73,155	126,121	139,792	156,985	158,209
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	12,5061	135,994	138,004	150,253	170,052	217,639	211,250
<b>Law</b>	31,495	35,195	40,269	81,559	87,190	67,264	64,951
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	151,685	181,253	230,099	314,082	404,112	430,726	461,705
<b>Languages</b>	9,645	11,407	13,023	30,904	40,811	43,704	40,782
<b>Humanities</b>	14,633	18,243	19,877	26,051	27,449	26,022	23,306
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	7,118	7,917	10,866	12,058	14,290	22,193	22,949
<b>Education</b>	13,870	15,649	22,886	32,171	39,736	42,388	39,038
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	338	51	19	9,995	19,698	28,618	28,198

## Chapter 4

### Applications by domicile

PGR	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10		17	
<i>Base</i>	5,269	6,543	7,592	25,507	30,243	51,015	56,253
<b>UK domiciled</b>	17,622	20,672	24,727	33,166	45,054	42,945	46,567
<b>Other EU</b>	23,775	22,799	25,703	32,081	37,880	26,530	29,313
<b>Non-EU</b>	72,067	85,605	98,115	119,201	136,868	108,636	119,275

PGT	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
<i>Base</i>	42,991	49,977	58,694	124,918	148,423	248,296	250,990
<b>UK domiciled</b>	89,488	97,566	112,849	189,194	210,068	194,090	178,693
<b>Other EU</b>	65,220	75,073	85,038	117,040	143,960	120,119	112,604
<b>Non-EU</b>	330,411	382,881	461,183	696,116	855,078	962,042	1,000,515

### Applications by course type within domicile

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10		17	
	<i>Base</i>	5,269	6,543	7,592	25,507	30,243	51,015	56,253
<b>UK domiciled</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	15,460	17,990	22,266	28,906	37,622	36,830	38,703
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	972	1,280	1,165	1,951	4,220	3,010	4,257
	<b>Research Masters</b>	1,190	1,402	1,296	2,309	3,213	3,099	3,607
<b>Other EU</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	16,680	17,010	19,920	26,422	31,386	22,518	24,608
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	135	85	177	298	348	335	529
	<b>Research Masters</b>	6,960	5,704	5,606	5,361	6,146	3,678	4,174
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>PhDs</b>	58,072	72,578	85,558	105,124	12,0636	96,698	105,428
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	407	655	863	1,707	1,738	1,766	2,029
	<b>Research</b>	13,588	12,372	11,694	12,369	14,494	10,172	11,813

		<b>Masters</b>							
<b>PGT</b>		<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	
		<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
		<i>Base</i>	42,991	49,977	58,694	124,918	148,423	248,296	250,990
<b>UK domiciled</b>	<b>Masters degrees</b>	65,081	73,248	83,331	160,502	174,393	153,695	132,472	
	<b>MBA</b> s	5,249	5,897	5,787	3,637	4,570	3,767	4,217	
	<b>PG Diplomas &amp; Certificates</b>	19,158	18,422	23,730	25,055	31,104	36,628	42,004	
<b>Other EU</b>	<b>Masters degrees</b>	63,674	73,219	82,865	111,710	137,595	114,444	106,293	
	<b>MBA</b> s	474	717	924	856	1,600	1,121	1,665	
	<b>PG Diplomas &amp; Certificates</b>	1,072	1,137	1,249	4,473	4,765	4,554	4,647	
<b>Non-EU</b>	<b>Masters degrees</b>	31,2471	357,390	428,949	644,391	802,169	920,992	958,724	
	<b>MBA</b> s	13,252	18,379	21,337	34,554	33,914	26,418	26,392	
	<b>PG Diplomas &amp; Certificates</b>	4,688	7,111	10,897	17,171	18,995	14,632	15,399	

## Applications by subject area within domicile

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10		17	
	<i>Base</i>	5,269	6,543	7,592	25,507	30,243	51,015	56,253
UK domiciled	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	415	380	705	2,007	3,624	2,590	2,891
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	242	55	122	1,706	2,955	3,038	4,006
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	1,513	3,135	4,004	3,076	4,346	6,523	7,464
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	30	20	20	107	160	105	108
	<b>Chemistry</b>	827	755	705	930	983	1,522	1,768
	<b>Physics</b>	835	760	625	1,075	1,065	1,064	1,310
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	655	1,237	1,607	1,356	1,663	3,599	3,442
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	719	629	757	1,012	1,118	1,023	980
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	475	602	639	750	1,035	1,367	1,085
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	2,226	2,603	3,099	3,587	4,605	4,197	3,838
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	5,314	5,220	6,028	6,215	7,634	5,525	6,063
	<b>Law</b>	653	895	1,047	1,240	1,139	954	1,102
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	1,011	1,417	1,512	1,477	1,792	1,697	1,854
	<b>Languages</b>	607	747	1,117	2,446	3,320	2,287	2,775
	<b>Humanities</b>	1,367	1,218	1,703	2,798	4,579	3,732	3,681
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	409	655	672	1,017	1,636	1,203	1,478
	<b>Education</b>	164	312	365	574	1,110	1,155	1,552
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	160	32	0	1,793	2,291	1,369	1,176
Other EU	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	40	80	80	492	838	606	712
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	30	0	32	475	836	800	1,185
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	563	1,120	1,542	1,257	1,753	1,973	2,630
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	40	0	10	67	102	32	51
	<b>Chemistry</b>	195	170	140	320	472	614	627
	<b>Physics</b>	165	210	170	435	463	332	405
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	210	335	570	480	568	875	1,316

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	822	820	935	1,228	1,347	1,066	1,064
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	854	920	760	890	974	957	1,266
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	1,474	1,310	1,659	1,958	2,530	1,831	2,254
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	14,418	13,036	14,283	14,233	15,877	9,831	10,324
	<b>Law</b>	1,176	1,176	1,255	1,671	1,498	874	1,043
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	2,009	2,214	2,469	3,420	3,909	2,613	2,129
	<b>Languages</b>	295	285	357	965	1,285	933	946
	<b>Humanities</b>	1,252	803	1,116	1,741	2,475	1,578	1,675
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	150	240	190	292	390	281	256
	<b>Education</b>	50	80	135	413	362	329	318
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	32	0	0	1,744	2,200	1,009	1,116
Non-EU	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	540	1,055	1,250	3,699	4,543	3,702	4,094
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	130	294	355	2,891	4,311	4,316	5,758
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2,112	3,623	5,702	5,937	6,319	6,760	6,719
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	300	140	130	777	905	516	462
	<b>Chemistry</b>	602	1,420	1,550	1,722	2,249	2,350	2,351
	<b>Physics</b>	512	790	540	1,217	1,420	1,111	1,280
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	1,400	2,862	3,380	2,640	3,242	2,793	3,231
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2,342	2,680	3,431	3,893	3,284	3,642	3,542
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	3,576	4,471	5,203	4,867	5,782	5,073	5,399
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	8,033	11,382	12,479	15,659	18,876	16,083	19,411
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	35,107	34,557	37,828	34,638	39,695	2,6735	28,307
	<b>Law</b>	3,779	4,256	5,055	4,787	5,070	4,253	5,093
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	7,982	11,480	12,462	16,039	18,263	14,641	15,759
	<b>Languages</b>	1,045	1,825	2,037	3,998	4,743	3,784	3,887
	<b>Humanities</b>	2,878	2,312	3,251	4,513	5,394	3,934	4,726
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	470	517	760	920	1,033	962	1,149
<b>Education</b>	1,195	1,845	2,660	3,194	3,405	3,109	3,408	
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	64	96	42	7,810	8,335	4,875	4,703	

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
	<i>Base</i>	42,991	49,977	58,694	124,918	148,243	248,296	250,990
UK domiciled	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	78	186	213	14780	21068	9828	11818
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	5,286	4,126	6,830	23,330	29,563	23,038	28,675
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	3,425	3,949	5,484	7,105	7,353	10,417	9,886
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	695	727	711	1443	1316	1582	1281
	<b>Chemistry</b>	196	386	355	579	361	469	520
	<b>Physics</b>	0	0	25	78	157	374	314
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4,216	4,506	5,201	6,228	6,375	6,532	4,952
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	851	1,044	1,209	3,411	4,981	3,156	2,848
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	2,853	3,225	3,518	8,682	8,990	6,949	5,450
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	7,266	8,847	9,754	14,392	12,789	12,922	10,300
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	18,352	18,842	19,215	31,220	30,725	36,526	30,678
	<b>Law</b>	6,804	6,320	6,961	12,738	14,837	12,475	8,860
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	21,234	25,698	30,201	26,578	27,842	25,529	25,297
	<b>Languages</b>	3,188	4,044	3,872	8,619	9,200	7,617	6,487
	<b>Humanities</b>	5,573	6,352	6,158	11,441	11,071	9,827	8,462
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	3,571	3,382	4,846	5,175	5,545	7,389	6,567
	<b>Education</b>	5,693	5,882	8,294	12,434	15,254	17,043	13,907
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	208	51	0	962	2,641	2,418	2,392	
Other EU	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	77	116	261	3,553	4,598	2,396	2,364
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	550	283	673	4,230	6,698	4,256	4,161
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2,189	1,671	1,799	2,144	2,411	3,396	2,811
		658	805	561	823	956	667	591
	<b>Veterinary Sciences /</b>							

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	agriculture / related subjects							
	Chemistry	200	140	175	211	369	322	255
	Physics	0	0	25	0	175	221	301
	Other physical sciences	1,553	1,649	1,882	1,782	2,087	2,422	2,130
	Mathematical sciences	1,470	1,905	2,795	2,754	4,973	4,173	4,069
	Computer science / librarianship / info science	3,534	3,372	3,319	6,142	7,608	6,580	5,389
	Engineering / technology / building / architecture	6,300	6,533	7,527	10,610	12,589	13,250	13,422
	Social / political / economic studies	23,002	26,636	25,698	26,438	31,285	26,935	25,803
	Law	4,991	5,943	6,586	17,524	18,812	11,143	11,625
	Business / administrative studies	15,018	18,781	25,213	28,176	36,094	29,309	27,413
	Languages	1,462	1,960	1,892	4,471	5,275	3,938	2,925
	Humanities	2,233	2,731	3,627	3,395	3,950	3,771	3,239
	Creative arts / design	581	822	1,137	1,471	1,430	2,161	1,891
	Education	1,374	1,726	1,867	2,444	3,134	2,875	2,249
	Unknown and combined subjects	26	0	0	867	1,516	2,304	1,968
Non-EU	Medicine and dentistry	348	1,190	1,484	16,451	18,870	13,014	13,615
	Subjects allied to Medicine	6,205	7,179	10,222	22,786	25,616	22,217	20,301
	Biological sciences	8,675	10,130	13,602	13,869	13,389	18,201	15,601
	Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects	2,948	3,441	3,212	5,023	4,906	4,688	4,357
	Chemistry	1,887	2,321	3,693	4,653	4,297	3,924	3,846
	Physics	76	76	177	80	341	634	1,259
	Other physical sciences	9,825	11,459	14,754	15,384	17,380	18,587	19,259
	Mathematical sciences	7,369	8,487	13,480	15,346	21,759	23,614	23,160
	Computer science / librarianship / info science	21,073	21,469	23,219	45,617	56,257	57,041	58,763



<b>PGT</b>		<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>
		<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	34,893	44,662	53,535	99,876	112,919	128,266
<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	83,204	89,966	92,230	91,908	107,575	153,154	153,926	
<b>Law</b>	19,555	22,712	26,310	49,409	52,289	43,015	44,044	
<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	113,818	134,499	171,696	257,354	337,711	373,772	406,371	
<b>Languages</b>	4,821	5,229	6,999	17,522	26,062	31,848	31,031	
<b>Humanities</b>	6,576	9,074	9,918	11,105	12,264	12,135	11,473	
<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2,869	3,645	4,555	5,240	7,149	12,341	14,210	
<b>Education</b>	6,164	7,346	12,028	16,331	20,752	21,781	22,541	
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	104	0	19	8,156	15,541	23,811	23,839	

## Chapter 5

### Applications by alumni status

<b>PGR</b>	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	<i>Base</i>	<b>Alumni</b>	<b>New applicants</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	6	20,754	25,329	131,273
<b>2009-2010</b>		23,652	28,240	153,209
<b>2010-2011</b>	12	36,979	20,263	119,892
<b>2011-2012</b>		405,30	20,605	131,361

<b>PGT</b>	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	<i>Base</i>	<b>Alumni</b>	<b>New applicants</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	9	99,516	48,042	755,848
<b>2009-2010</b>		114,557	53,087	884,451
<b>2010-2011</b>	15	179,429	45,651	900,546
<b>2011-2012</b>		181,459	40,047	917,262

## Chapter 6

### Applications by age

PGR	Base HEIs	Base	21 and under	22-23	24-25	26-27	28-30	31-40	41-50	51+
2005-2006	6	5,240	4,620	17,046	22,698	19,359	18,692	23,358	5,786	1,397
2006-2007		6,551	4,122	19,650	25,079	21,799	21,574	28,390	6,773	1,749
2007-2008		7,593	4,308	21,853	29,180	22,687	25,510	34,562	8,385	1,933
2008-2009	10	25,541	12,749	37,458	36,621	27,519	26,151	34,410	7,769	1,991
2009-2010		30,275	15,817	46,106	42,892	31,500	31,487	38,361	10,823	3,005
2010-2011	17	51,345	12,235	35,983	32,314	25,330	25,138	36,599	9,647	2,783
2011-2012		56,584	12,776	37,193	34,871	26,725	29,073	41,286	10,888	3,688

PGR	Base HEIs	Base	21 and under	22-23	24-25	26-27	28-30	31-40	41-50	51+
2005-2006	7	43,671	66,843	129,601	87,533	59,690	55,937	70,272	17,342	4,319
2006-2007		50,639	81,612	151,520	101,068	66,066	60,516	77,648	18,861	4,423
2007-2008		59,540	102,891	176,273	120,359	78,121	71,661	89,128	23,679	5,168
2008-2009	13	126,028	173,577	302,571	181,358	112,244	98,327	106,778	27,706	8,056
2009-2010		149,783	222,518	393,814	212,484	121,346	108,174	117,710	32,918	9,372
2010-2011	20	249,998	236,258	462,706	211,919	116,954	101,562	116,139	31,829	9,450
2011-2012		252,626	247,342	470,110	204,453	112,060	101,810	122,595	33,589	9,846

### Applications by course type within age

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10	
	<i>Base</i>	5,240	6,551	7,593	25,541	30,275
Age 23 and under	PhDs	15,348	18,407	20,682	43,350	53,159
	Professional doctorates	240	295	285	438	428
	Research Masters	6,078	5,070	5,194	6,418	8,336
Age 24 - 30	PhDs	47,222	56,033	65,393	77,759	91,247
	Professional doctorates	579	537	560	1,362	1,730
	Research Masters	12,948	11,882	11,424	11,170	12,902
Age 31+	PhDs	27,124	33,188	41,572	39,937	45,766
	Professional doctorates	705	1,198	1,320	1,781	3,817
	Research Masters	2,712	2,526	1,988	2,452	2,606

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
	<i>Base</i>	43,671	50,639	59,540	126,028	149,783	249,998	252,626
Age 23 and under	<b>Masters</b>	190,137	225,348	269,744	454,159	59,1383	631,254	646,919
	<b>MBAs</b>	1,547	2,473	2,012	7,092	5,722	3,488	3,434
	<b>PG diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	4,759	5,311	7,408	9,044	10,105	11,813	10,261
Age 24 - 30	<b>Masters</b>	185,807	205,997	241,937	350,032	395,825	360,358	346,932
	<b>MBAs</b>	8,621	12,308	15,280	23,263	24,245	16,849	15,839
	<b>PG diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	8,732	9,345	12,924	16,722	19,184	16,002	15,869
Age 31+	<b>Masters</b>	71,165	78,617	91,623	113,256	124,238	111,150	110,667
	<b>MBAs</b>	8,943	9,981	10,632	8,636	10,807	10,231	12,467
	<b>PG diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	11,826	12,335	15,719	20,193	24,409	22,609	27,711

### Applications by subject area within age

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6	10	17				
	<i>Base</i>	5,240	6,551	7,593	25,541	30,275	51,345	56,584
Age 23 and under	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	220	275	510	1,732	2,402	1,347	1,523
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	10	64	20	1,901	2,893	2,150	2,512
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	1,028	2,485	3,544	3,745	4,568	5,027	4,886
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	10	10	0	122	103	71	94
	<b>Chemistry</b>	630	740	835	1,342	1,332	1,593	1,791
	<b>Physics</b>	620	730	545	1,367	1,445	1,317	1,578
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	345	755	1,200	1,132	1,495	1,727	2,012
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	1,431	1,320	1,318	2,426	2,317	1,958	1,844
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	833	911	498	1,228	1,814	1,477	1,390
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	1,680	2,357	2,935	4,370	5,510	4,526	4,946
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	10,322	9,982	9,521	12,517	15,373	9,174	9,421
	<b>Law</b>	1,023	689	1,004	681	1,043	708	814
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	1,994	2,206	2,420	5,900	7,294	4,083	3,800
	<b>Languages</b>	180	290	450	2,759	3,238	1,941	2,122
<b>Humanities</b>	1,146	713	1,126	2,874	3,605	2,411	2,590	

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	130	180	180	612	855	596	593
	<b>Education</b>	0	65	55	520	665	487	523
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	64	0	0	4,980	5,970	3,736	3,412
Age 24 to 30	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	345	655	725	2,719	4,087	2,902	2,939
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	137	125	105	2,112	3,430	2,925	4,183
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	1,919	3,982	5,779	4,418	5,346	6,185	6,069
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	170	40	60	343	595	292	249
	<b>Chemistry</b>	822	1,185	1,030	1,185	1,795	1,742	1,621
	<b>Physics</b>	490	710	445	1,117	1,240	883	1,007
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	1,015	2,215	2,280	1,957	2,470	2,377	2,607
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	1,427	1,808	2,651	2,746	2,615	2,144	1,930
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	2,507	3,019	3,621	3,253	3,769	2,859	3,423
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	5,889	7,655	8,304	10,484	13,144	9,276	10,533
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	33,200	32,238	34,650	31,407	35,996	21,796	23,075
	<b>Law</b>	2,918	3,485	3,754	4,093	4,083	3053	3,583
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	4,868	7,037	7,910	9,194	9,510	7,251	8,095
	<b>Languages</b>	1,060	1,205	1,692	3,307	4,024	2,648	2,760
	<b>Humanities</b>	3,185	1,989	2,871	4,027	5,586	3,783	4,193
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	420	545	805	963	1,192	804	1,007
	<b>Education</b>	377	495	695	1,749	1,714	1,168	1,533
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	0	64	0	5,215	5,284	2,577	2,588
Age 31+	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	430	585	770	1,742	2,515	1,812	2,269
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	240	160	384	1,069	1,768	1,918	2,926
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	1,171	1396	1,870	1,741	2,166	2,864	2,712
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	170	110	100	490	463	293	240
	<b>Chemistry</b>	142	420	500	445	582	620	815
	<b>Physics</b>	377	320	330	263	288	308	420
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	875	1,449	2,077	1,422	1,507	1,414	1,399
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	995	1,001	1,124	970	823	978	1,196
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	1,535	2,053	2,468	2,025	2,234	2,186	2,110
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	4,134	5,438	6,183	6,599	7,565	5,374	6,908
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	11,146	10,583	13,921	11,217	11,901	9,456	10,115
<b>Law</b>	1,652	2,153	2,584	2,939	25,86	1,929	2,314	

<b>PGR</b>		<b>2005- 2006</b>	<b>2006- 2007</b>	<b>2007- 2008</b>	<b>2008- 2009</b>	<b>2009- 2010</b>	<b>2010- 2011</b>	<b>2011- 2012</b>
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	4,128	5,838	6,068	5,849	7,253	5,970	6,215
	<b>Languages</b>	677	1,362	1,354	1,403	2,125	1,772	1,981
	<b>Humanities</b>	1,166	1,616	2,073	2,181	3,293	2,691	2,967
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	479	687	637	664	989	964	1,151
	<b>Education</b>	1,032	1,677	2,395	1,922	2,503	2,559	2,887
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	192	64	42	1,227	1,627	963	940

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		7			13		20	
<i>Base</i>		43,671	50,639	59,540	126,028	149,783	249,998	252,626
Age 23 and under	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	19	45	10	9,253	14,259	5,372	5,590
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	1,685	1,676	2,363	16,372	20,689	12,302	12,684
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	6,335	6,951	8,577	10,369	10,447	14,081	12,382
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	991	1,216	921	2,155	2,246	2,217	1,884
	<b>Chemistry</b>	860	1,158	1,606	2,339	2,219	1,857	2,174
	<b>Physics</b>	0	25	76	61	340	787	1,051
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	4,109	5,366	6,915	8,820	10,377	9,677	9,463
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	6,914	7,291	11,440	13,233	21,249	18,795	18,477
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	11,939	12,994	13,892	31635	41,954	35,994	35,828
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	15,872	18,618	21,969	56506	64,033	65,275	64,861
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	58,576	65,300	64,663	75436	86,543	115,816	114,082
	<b>Law</b>	11,709	14,554	16,346	33721	37,809	30,452	28,577
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	62,732	79,147	106,003	163776	230,036	253,689	276,921
	<b>Languages</b>	3,709	3,865	4,881	15169	22,532	24,244	21,956
	<b>Humanities</b>	6,540	8,808	10,223	13398	14,151	13,369	12,269
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2,250	3,022	4,526	5229	6,859	11,299	12,191
	<b>Education</b>	2,152	3,072	4,746	8050	11,179	13,394	13,555
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	52	26	10	4773	10,287	17,934	16,669	
Age 24 to 30	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	377	983	1,311	15795	18,270	9,939	10,290
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	4,436	4,868	7,279	18657	21,578	18,631	19,104
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	6,137	6,237	8,142	9282	8,565	10,378	9,085
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1,976	2,100	2,074	3346	3,562	3,445	2,992
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1,079	1,357	2,112	2620	2,431	2,180	1,522
	<b>Physics</b>	25	25	127	48	272	385	643
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	8,333	9,035	11,662	11121	12,081	11,328	10,930
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	2,272	3,443	5,212	6755	8,189	6,692	6,189

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	12,094	11,433	12,546	23279	25,551	22,090	19,626
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	24,198	29,149	34,480	51618	58,158	56,471	54,864
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	49,803	53,733	55,070	57320	64,459	65,473	62,769
	<b>Law</b>	14,300	15,171	17,836	35678	36,998	26,516	25,776
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	61,600	71,059	87,876	112954	129,583	110,663	110,604
	<b>Languages</b>	3,998	4,828	5,527	11328	137,80	12,352	11,114
	<b>Humanities</b>	4,535	5,544	5,930	8411	8,881	7,772	6,672
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2,998	3,196	3,939	4665	4,738	6,392	6,704
	<b>Education</b>	4,867	5,490	9,009	12755	15,175	14,895	12,458
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	130	0	10	4385	6,980	7,607	7,297
Age 31+	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	174	464	676	11,271	12,785	5,843	7,513
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	6,373	5,651	8,823	15,965	2,0552	16,679	20,736
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2,252	2,871	4,671	4,123	4,631	4,962	5,081
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1,518	1,717	1,614	1,811	1,616	1,446	1,197
	<b>Chemistry</b>	363	381	572	513	407	390	519
	<b>Physics</b>	51	25	25	49	61	77	173
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	3,626	3,767	4,256	3,988	4,153	3,911	3,325
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	503	722	967	1,577	2,473	1,682	1,514
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	3,551	3,758	3,774	5,525	5,369	5,305	5,499
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	10,173	14,130	16,253	17,295	17,429	16,491	17,197
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	16,653	16,844	18,146	17,334	18,989	23,897	22,630
	<b>Law</b>	5,396	5,431	6,077	12,113	12,286	7,849	8,005
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	26,982	29,980	34,392	27,650	31,388	29,224	32,766
	<b>Languages</b>	1,928	2,658	2,607	4,353	4,461	3,953	3,931
	<b>Humanities</b>	3,558	3,882	3,725	4,230	4,404	3,799	3,418
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	1,844	1,679	2,351	2,152	2,693	3,631	3,382
<b>Education</b>	6,831	6,946	9,045	11,334	13,334	12,888	11,740	
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	156	25	0	803	2,422	1,963	2,220	





## Applications by gender

PGR	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		Male	Female
		<i>Base</i>		
2005-2006	6	5,274	71,389	42,090
2006-2007		6,562	81,938	47,306
2007-2008		7,636	93,274	55,696
2008-2009	10	25,665	110,814	74,425
2009-2010		30,366	129,138	91,315
2010-2011	17	51,464	106,968	73,313
2011-2012		56,724	117,161	79,610

PGT	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		Male	Female
		<i>Base</i>		
2005-2006	7	43,742	265,587	226,856
2006-2007		50,801	306,100	257,481
2007-2008		59,788	362,758	307,172
2008-2009	13	126,362	528,225	485,148
2009-2010		149,896	602,595	616,998
2010-2011	20	250,115	604,027	683,490
2011-2012		252,685	598,755	703,446

## Applications by qualification type within gender

PGR		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6			10		17	
	<i>Base</i>	5,274	6,562	7,636	25,665	30,366	51,464	56,724
Male	<b>PhDs</b>	55,298	67,064	78,785	96,146	110,398	94,293	102,161
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	789	1,266	1,373	2,332	3,561	2,535	3,320
	<b>Research Masters</b>	15,302	13,608	13,116	12,337	15,180	10,138	11,676
Female	<b>PhDs</b>	34,931	40,662	49,324	65,038	79,863	63,719	67,812
	<b>Professional doctorates</b>	755	774	882	1,685	2,765	2,581	3,522
	<b>Research Masters</b>	6,404	5,870	5,490	7,703	8,686	7,008	8,274

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7			13		20	
	<i>Base</i>	43,742	50,801	59,788	126,362	149,896	250,115	252,685
Male	<b>Masters</b>	242,127	276,175	324,554	476,058	547,107	559,409	552,217
	<b>MBA</b> s	14,127	18,548	21,681	29,793	30,380	21,818	22,214
	<b>PG diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	9,334	11,378	16,522	22,374	25,107	22,800	24,323
Female	<b>Masters</b>	205,719	234,985	280,472	450,389	575,528	639,609	653,555
	<b>MBA</b> s	5,110	6,822	6,923	9,596	10,583	9,867	10,950
	<b>PG diplomas &amp; certificates</b>	16,027	15,673	19,777	25,164	30,887	34,013	38,941

## Applications by subject area within gender

PGR		2005- 2006	2006- 2007	2007- 2008	2008- 2009	2009- 2010	2010- 2011	2011- 2012	
		Base: Participating HEIs			6		10		17
		Base	5,274	6,562	7,636	25,665	30,366	51,464	56,724
Male	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	520	715	1,055	3,124	4,444	3,449	3,861	
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	122	145	259	2,333	3,739	3,846	5,306	
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	2,194	4,221	5,851	4,966	5,820	8,157	8,079	
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	270	140	140	6,52	730	409	319	
	<b>Chemistry</b>	974	1,635	1,525	1,850	2,420	2,973	3,217	
	<b>Physics</b>	1,147	1,350	940	2,109	2,297	1,986	2,319	
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	1,445	2,827	3,640	3,005	3,391	4,671	5,135	
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	3,010	2,710	3,416	4,421	3,896	4,269	4,124	
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	2,993	3,777	4,253	4,440	5,550	5,186	5,128	
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	9,908	12,925	14,655	17,239	20,608	17,812	20,798	
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	32,299	31,357	33,533	30,384	34,091	23,235	25,189	
	<b>Law</b>	2,937	3,849	4,592	4,426	4,621	3,508	4,167	
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	7,868	10,049	11,160	13,941	15,272	12,100	12,766	
	<b>Languages</b>	840	1,320	1,675	3,067	4,016	3,136	3,257	
	<b>Humanities</b>	3,536	2,987	3,728	5,616	7,828	5,481	6,428	
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	492	552	870	1,056	1,525	1,180	1,337	
	<b>Education</b>	770	1,315	1,950	1,685	1,943	1,767	2,047	
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	64	64	32	6,503	6,947	3,806	3,688		
Female	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	475	800	980	3,074	4,561	3,462	3,860	
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	265	204	250	2,750	4,368	4,401	5,841	
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	1,994	3,657	5,387	5,334	6,616	8,591	8,962	
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	100	20	20	303	432	246	301	
	<b>Chemistry</b>	650	710	870	1,127	1,288	1,540	1,654	
	<b>Physics</b>	365	410	395	643	677	521	683	
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	820	1,607	1,917	1,506	2,092	2,716	3,042	
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	843	1,419	1,707	1,727	1,859	1,447	1,508	
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	1,912	2,216	2,349	2,067	2,271	2,243	2,642	
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	1,915	2,570	2,972	4,272	5,616	4,562	5,172	
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	22,495	21,424	24,606	24,767	29,180	18,871	19,523	
	<b>Law</b>	2,656	2,478	2,765	3,263	3,090	2,577	3,086	
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	3,164	5,062	5,328	7,058	8,810	6,892	7,129	

PGR		2005-	2006-	2007-	2008-	2009-	2010-	2011-
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	<b>Languages</b>	1,107	1,537	1,836	4,417	5,383	3,885	4,371
	<b>Humanities</b>	1,961	1,346	2,342	3,472	4,656	3,783	3,678
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	537	860	752	1,184	1,535	1,271	1,548
	<b>Education</b>	639	922	1,210	2,516	2,943	2,831	3,299
	<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	192	64	10	4,944	5,939	3,478	3,313

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
		7			13		20	
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>		7			13		20	
<i>Base</i>		43,742	50,801	59,788	126,362	149,896	250,115	252,685
Male	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	290	706	983	13,693	15,872	10,738	12,199
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	5,878	5,937	8,447	19,190	20,916	17,279	18,047
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	6,248	6,884	8,720	9,984	9,095	12,953	10,780
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	3,271	3,860	3,473	4,897	4,775	4,213	3,743
	<b>Chemistry</b>	1,600	2,140	3,036	3,206	2,771	2,795	2,741
	<b>Physics</b>	76	51	127	127	526	940	1,340
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	10,977	12,166	14,342	14,194	15,321	16,407	15,766
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	5,222	7,278	10,579	13,038	20,481	18,886	18,073
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	16,144	15,128	15,371	32,279	38,171	38,672	35,715
	<b>Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b>	42,210	51,860	60,834	101,786	111,961	119,571	118,017
	<b>Social / political / economic studies</b>	56,414	60,679	60,726	68,121	75,767	89,693	86,452
	<b>Law</b>	15,504	16,658	19,843	39,436	40,103	29,746	29,055
	<b>Business / administrative studies</b>	84,081	101,524	128,457	165,068	196,455	187,818	196,652
	<b>Languages</b>	2,633	3,283	3,590	8,292	9,492	10,730	9,708
	<b>Humanities</b>	7,563	9,464	10,769	14,205	14,524	13,481	12,021
	<b>Creative arts / design</b>	2,380	2,716	3,362	3,969	4,833	6,907	6,783
	<b>Education</b>	4,966	5,768	10,081	12,198	13,414	10,781	10,097
<b>Unknown and combined subjects</b>	130	0	19	4,542	8,118	12,418	11,568	
Female	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	280	786	1,014	22,627	29,479	14,598	15,866
	<b>Subjects allied to Medicine</b>	6,660	6,278	10,048	31,951	41,988	33,207	36,827
	<b>Biological sciences</b>	8,506	9,175	12,669	13,862	14,605	19,599	18,115
	<b>Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b>	1,233	1,208	1,155	2,444	2,659	3,058	2,611
	<b>Chemistry</b>	703	756	1,254	2,266	2,296	1,990	1,903
	<b>Physics</b>	0	25	101	31	147	316	534
	<b>Other physical sciences</b>	5,110	6,067	8,549	9,758	11,278	12,086	11,409
	<b>Mathematical sciences</b>	4,468	4,187	7,030	8,588	11,491	12,200	12,194
	<b>Computer science / librarianship / info science</b>	11,509	13,141	14,859	28,271	34,742	32,335	34,345

PGT		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Engineering / technology / building / architecture		8,290	10,367	12,311	24,335	27,825	37,392	40,179
Social / political / economic studies		68,628	75,306	77,269	82,114	94,279	127,873	124,672
Law		15,991	18,527	20,426	42,106	47,076	37,510	35,897
Business / administrative studies		67,556	79,681	101,642	148,884	207,553	242,741	264,881
Languages		7,012	8,114	9,434	22,589	31,319	32,973	31,066
Humanities		7,070	8,770	9,099	11,829	12,920	12,541	11,263
Creative arts / design		4,738	5,191	7,504	8,077	9,440	15,281	16,132
Education		8,894	9,851	12,805	19,962	26,321	31,600	28,930
Unknown and combined subjects		208	51	0	5,453	11,580	16,189	16,622

## UK-domiciled applications by ethnicity

PGR	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	6		10			17	
<i>Base</i>	967	1,219	1,449	4,615	6,135	12,492	17,111
<b>White</b>	12,020	15,234	16,630	21,942	30,709	29,467	33,111
<b>Mixed</b>	332	188	588	1,203	1,818	1,262	1,111
<b>Asian</b>	1,550	1,439	2,061	2,420	2,635	2,897	3,111
<b>Black</b>	1,091	759	1,760	1,332	1,741	2,872	3,111
<b>Chinese</b>	191	327	272	781	1,015	600	511
<b>Other</b>	206	571	707	538	308	644	511
<b>Not known / information refused</b>	1,972	1,894	2,329	1,980	3,212	3,246	3,111

PGT	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
<i>Base: Participating HEIs</i>	7		13			20	
<i>Base</i>	6,240	6,897	7,854	19,772	21,244	34,687	40,111
<b>White</b>	62,152	66,515	75,632	118,730	130,219	113,482	111,111
<b>Mixed</b>	1,922	2,298	2,695	5,752	6,404	4,839	4,111
<b>Asian</b>	6,418	7,925	8,667	19,593	21,521	16,559	15,111
<b>Black</b>	5,384	5,183	7,078	13,662	16,440	15,736	15,111
<b>Chinese</b>	1,313	1,825	1,708	3,441	3,514	3,243	3,111
<b>Other</b>	1,018	994	1,101	3,987	3,815	2,399	2,111
<b>Not known / information refused</b>	6,873	7,382	9,487	13,865	17,438	20,173	20,111

## Applications by disability status

<b>PGR</b>	<i>Base: HEIs</i>	<i>Base</i>	<b>Disabled</b>	<b>Not disabled</b>	<b>Information refused/unknown</b>
<b>2005-2006</b>	6	5,282	3,640	104,739	5,237
<b>2006-2007</b>		6,563	5,015	121,830	2,431
<b>2007-2008</b>		7,639	5,155	141,942	1,918
<b>2008-2009</b>	10	25,547	5,966	154,293	24,479
<b>2009-2010</b>		30,311	6,232	183,055	30,910
<b>2010-2011</b>	17	47,529	6,211	138,971	27,237
<b>2011-2012</b>		51,644	6,574	149,289	30,849

<b>PGT</b>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Base: HEIs</i>	<b>Disabled</b>	<b>Not disabled</b>	<b>Information refused/unknown</b>
<b>2005-2006</b>	7	43,754	13,484	448,949	30,126
<b>2006-2007</b>		50,823	14,769	521,434	27,591
<b>2007-2008</b>		59,792	17,275	627,264	25,428
<b>2008-2009</b>	13	126,391	22,289	733,075	258,026
<b>2009-2010</b>		149,883	24,399	905,113	289,685
<b>2010-2011</b>	20	231,601	25,540	933,828	272,573
<b>2011-2012</b>		232,869	24,942	937,589	280,317



## Appendix II: Postgraduate typology

The table below sets the specific types of study and examples of corresponding qualifications within both PGR and PGT programmes as defined for the purposes of the this study.

PGR					
Doctoral Degrees	PhD	DPhil	MPhil*		
Professional doctorates	EngD	DNursSci	VetMD	DBA	DClinPsy
Research Masters					
PGT					
Masters Degrees	MA	MSc			
Masters of Business Administration					
Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates	PGCert	PGDip			

After close consultation with BIS, MPhils were categorised under Doctoral Degrees, although it is acknowledged that there is some institutional variation in terms of the positioning of this qualification being closer to a Masters Degree or a PhD.

# Appendix III Table of student numbers

The figures presented below are taken from the Students in Higher Education Institutions tables compiled by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). They provide information on the actual numbers of students registered to postgraduate study at English Higher Education Institutions in each of the academic years covered by this study. Please note that figures have not been included for academic years post 2007-2008, due to the fact that this data is not freely available online. Figures are rounded to the nearest five students.

	PGR		PGT		Other Postgraduate		Total	
	N	% change	N	% change	N	% change	N	% change
<b>2005-2006</b>	23,015	-	118,370	-	85,180	-	<b>226,565</b>	-
<b>2006-2007</b>	24,610	7%	124,005	5%	82,750	-3%	<b>231,365</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>2007-2008</b>	23,545	-4%	129,680	5%	77,285	-7%	<b>230,510</b>	<b>-&lt;1%</b>



# Appendix IV Research instruments

## Data specification sent to participating HEIs

### Data Specification

### Data sharing specification: Demand for Postgraduate Study

- 1.1 Thank you for your valuable contribution to this research study into the student demand for postgraduate study so far. We are pleased to confirm that the next stage of the research is going ahead which entails the collation of application data from a selected number of HEIs in England. The purpose of this exercise is to enable us to analyse a robust sample of the postgraduate application data to identify patterns and trends over time.

#### What type of data is in scope?

Line by line data

- 1.2 We would like to obtain copies of your application databases for applications received in the following academic years **[DELETE AS APPROPRIATE]**:

- 2005-06 (for study from September 2006 onwards)
- 2006-07 (for study from September 2007 onwards)
- 2007-08 (for study from September 2008 onwards)
- 2008-09 (for study from September 2009 onwards)
- 2009-10 (for study from September 2010 onwards)
- 2010-11 (for study from September 2011 onwards)
- 2011-12 (for study from September 2012 onwards)

- 1.3 For the years specified above, we require **anonymised line-by-line** records (i.e. one row per application as opposed to aggregate or summary data). PLEASE NOTE we are not looking for just records of students who went on to study at your institution; in order to understand levels of demand we wish to collate **all** application data, regardless of whether or not the individual went on to enrol on a course.

- 1.4 Please exclude all applications for:

- Integrated Masters Programmes
- PGCE courses

If this is not easily achievable, please flag these records accordingly.

- 1.5 Information on the specific data fields and field format we require is set out in 'Data Fields' sections below (see sections 1.14 and 1.15).

#### Aggregated data

- 1.6 In addition to the row by row application data, we would be grateful if you could provide us with any **aggregated data** held by the institution dating from 2003 (where possible). This may be in the form of summary tables or a qualitative précis.
- 1.7 Any aggregated data submitted will be used alongside the line by line data. These aggregate data will supplement the detailed data and should not be provided in place of the individual line by line records we have requested.

#### What will the data be used for?

- 1.8 The data you provide will be used in quantitative analysis of application data from a number of English HEIs. The data will be combined with that of other institutions so that it can be used in the future as a benchmark against which the impact of wider HE policy change (particularly the increase in undergraduate tuition fees) might be measured.
- 1.9 In addition, IFF will conduct analysis by key demographic groups to understand how the demand for postgraduate study among these groups has changed over the last decade.
- 1.10 Please be assured that any findings will not be reported on in such a way that will allow individual institutions to be identified.

#### How will the data be handled?

- 1.11 Every effort will be taken to assist HEIs with the extraction and transfer of data. If you require any technical support or advice, please contact Anna Ponomarenko at [anna.ponomarenko@iffresearch.com](mailto:anna.ponomarenko@iffresearch.com) or Jessica Huntley Hewitt at [jessica.huntleyhewitt@iffresearch.com](mailto:jessica.huntleyhewitt@iffresearch.com), or telephone IFF on 0207 250 3035.
- 1.12 Data should be transferred using IFF's secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site. This site is hosted in-house on IFF's encrypted server. Data transfer can only occur when using an approved registered account and data must be encrypted to AES-256 compliance and password protected. Further instruction on how to register on the FTP site and upload data is provided in the 'Transferring Data' section (1.16 onwards).
- 1.13 If you require a data transfer agreement then please inform either Anna or Jessica who will arrange for the document to be drawn up.

#### Data fields

- 1.14 For each year of application data requested, please provide the following information specified in the tables on the next pages. Where possible, please provide information in the suggested format given in the tables. However, we also value any free text information that can be coded by IFF to produce the types of information that we require.
- 1.15 We have produced this list of fields based on information provided by HEIs during the site visits at the end of last year. We understand these to be the data fields most commonly held on application databases. If there are particular fields that you don't have then please let us know and we can discuss alternatives.

## Postgraduate application data fields required by IFF Research

Data Field		Notes / Format
1	Date application submitted	DD/MM/YYYY
2	Gender	Male / Female
3	Date of Birth	DD/MM/YYYY
4	Mode of Study applied to	<p><b>Preferably in the following format:</b></p> <p>1.) Full-time  2.) Part-time,  3.) Other (including distance learning, sandwich courses etc)</p>
5	Disability Status	<p>1.) Yes  2.) No  3.) Refused / Unknown</p>

Data Field		Notes / Format
6	Ethnicity	<p>We are particularly interested in obtaining this information for British Nationals. Where possible, please use the following categories;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) White - British</li> <li>2.) White – Irish</li> <li>3.) White – Scottish</li> <li>4.) Irish Traveller</li> <li>5.) White - other</li> <li>6.) Mixed – White and Black Caribbean</li> <li>7.) Mixed – White and Black African</li> <li>8.) Mixed – White and Asian</li> <li>9.) Mixed – Any other Mixed</li> <li>10.) Asian or Asian British – Indian</li> <li>11.) Asian or Asian British – Pakistani</li> <li>12.) Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi</li> <li>13.) Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian</li> <li>14.) Black or Black British – Caribbean</li> <li>15.) Black or Black British – African</li> <li>16.) Black or Black British – Any other Black</li> <li>17.) Chinese</li> <li>18.) Any other ethnic group</li> <li>19.) Not known / Information refused</li> </ol>

Data Field		Notes / Format
7	Funding status	Please indicate where possible whether applicants fall within the following areas: <b>1.) UK Domiciled</b> <b>2.) Other EU</b> <b>3.) Non-EU</b> If this is not possible, please provide any relevant field(s) which can be used to derive this information for funding purposes (e.g. country of residence)
8	Course Title	Please provide the course or programme title that the applicant was applying for.

Data Field		Notes / Format
9	Subject Area	<p>Where possible, please refer to HEFCE subject categories as outlined below. For information on how JACS maps onto this categorisation please refer to Appendix 1</p> <p><b>(1) Medicine and dentistry</b></p> <p><b>(2) Subjects allied to Medicine</b></p> <p><b>(3) Biological sciences</b></p> <p><b>(4) Veterinary Sciences / agriculture / related subjects</b></p> <p><b>(5) Chemistry</b></p> <p><b>(6) Physics</b></p> <p><b>(7) Other physical sciences</b></p> <p><b>(8) Mathematical sciences</b></p> <p><b>(9) Computer science / librarianship / info science</b></p> <p><b>(10) Engineering / technology / building / architecture</b></p> <p><b>(11) Social / political / economic studies</b></p> <p><b>(12) Law</b></p> <p><b>(13) Business / administrative studies</b></p> <p><b>(14) Languages</b></p> <p><b>(15) Humanities</b></p>



Data Field		Notes / Format
10	Qualification Type	<p>If possible please code the qualification applied for using the categories below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) <b>Doctoral degrees (PhD and DPhil)</b></li> <li>2.) <b>Professional doctorates (e.g. EngD, DNursSci, VetMD, EdD, DBA, DClinPsy)</b></li> <li>3.) <b>Higher doctorates and honorary doctorates (e.g. Doctor of Sciences (DSc/ScD) and Doctor of Letters (DLitt/LittD))</b></li> <li>4.) <b>Masters degrees (taught e.g. MA, MSc)</b></li> <li>5.) <b>Research masters (MRes, MPhil)</b></li> <li>6.) <b>Masters of Business Administration (MBA)</b></li> <li>7.) <b>Postgraduate diplomas and certificates</b></li> </ol> <p>If this isn't possible, for example, because you use alternative classifications, please provide whatever data you are able to.</p>
11	Previous HEI	<p>Where possible, please provide <b>4 digit Institutional code</b>. Please see Appendix 1</p> <p>Alternatively, please provide any free text fields</p>
12	Date of Previous Qualification Achieved	<p>Please provide in the following format:</p> <p><b>DD/MM/YYYY</b></p>

Data Field		Notes / Format
13	Existing student	<p>Where possible, please indicate whether or not applicant was an existing undergraduate student.</p> <p><b>1.) Yes</b> <b>2.) No</b></p> <p>This could potentially be done by appending an existing student number where applicable</p>
14	Was an offer made?	<p>Please indicate on the records whether or not an offer was made to the applicant</p> <p><b>1.) Yes</b> <b>2.) No</b></p>
15	Did the applicant enrol on the course?	<p>Please indicate on the records whether the applicant ultimately registered on the course</p> <p><b>1.) Yes</b> <b>2.) No</b></p>
16	Postcode	<p>Please provide the postcode of applicants' permanent address at the time of making the application.</p> <p>We are really only interested in this information for British Nationals.</p>

## Appendix 1: Subject classifications

JACS SUBJECT AREA	JACS 1.7 code (refers to first two characters only)	JACS 2 code (refers to first two characters only) for 2007/08 onwards	Subject area
1			Medicine and Dentistry
2			Subjects allied to Medicine
3			Biological sciences
4 or 5			Veterinary sciences, Agriculture and related Subjects
6	F1	F1	Chemistry
6	F3	F3	Physical Sciences
6	else	Else	Other physical sciences
7			Mathematical Sciences
8 or E			Computer science, Librarianship & Info Science
9 or A			Engineering, Technology, Building & Architecture
B			Social political and economic studies
C			Law
D			Business and administrative studies
F			Languages
G			Humanities
H			Creative arts and design
I			Education
J			Unknown and combined subjects

For more information please see:

<http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/102/136/1/4/> (JACS 1.7) and

<http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/102/136/1/6/> (JACS 2.0)

## Appendix 2: 4 Digit Institutional Codes

### Valid Entries

0001	The Open University
0002	Cranfield University
0003	Royal College of Art
0007	Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln
0009	Buckinghamshire New University
0010	Central School of Speech and Drama
0011	University of Chester
0012	Canterbury Christ Church University
0013	York St John University
0014	University College Plymouth St Mark and St John
0016	Edge Hill University
0017	University College Falmouth
0018	Harper Adams University College
0021	The University of Winchester
0023	Liverpool Hope University
0024	University of the Arts, London
0026	University of Bedfordshire
0027	The University of Northampton
0028	Newman University College
0030	Ravensbourne

0031	Roehampton University
0032	Rose Bruford College
0033	Royal Academy of Music
0034	Royal College of Music
0035	Royal Northern College of Music
0037	Southampton Solent University
0038	University of Cumbria
0039	St Mary's University College, Twickenham
0040	Leeds Trinity University College
0041	Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
0046	The University of Worcester
0047	Anglia Ruskin University
0048	Bath Spa University
0049	The University of Bolton
0050	Bournemouth University
0051	The University of Brighton
0052	Birmingham City University
0053	The University of Central Lancashire
0054	University of Gloucestershire
0056	Coventry University
0057	University of Derby
0058	The University of East London
0059	The University of Greenwich

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0060	University of Hertfordshire
0061	The University of Huddersfield
0062	The University of Lincoln
0063	Kingston University
0064	Leeds Metropolitan University
0065	Liverpool John Moores University
0066	The Manchester Metropolitan University
0067	Middlesex University
0068	De Montfort University
0069	The University of Northumbria at Newcastle
0071	The Nottingham Trent University
0072	Oxford Brookes University
0073	The University of Plymouth
0074	The University of Portsmouth
0075	Sheffield Hallam University
0076	London South Bank University
0077	Staffordshire University
0078	The University of Sunderland
0079	The University of Teesside
0080	Thames Valley University
0081	University of the West of England, Bristol
0082	The University of Chichester
0083	The University of Westminster
0085	The University of Wolverhampton

0086	The University of Wales, Newport
0087	Glyndŵr University
0089	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
0090	University of Glamorgan
0091	Swansea Metropolitan University
0092	Trinity University College
0095	University of Abertay Dundee
0096	Edinburgh College of Art
0097	Glasgow School of Art
0100	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
0101	The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama
0104	The Robert Gordon University
0105	The University of the West of Scotland
0106	Glasgow Caledonian University
0107	Edinburgh Napier University
0108	Aston University
0109	The University of Bath
0110	The University of Birmingham
0111	The University of Bradford
0112	The University of Bristol
0113	Brunel University
0114	The University of Cambridge
0115	The City University

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0116	University of Durham
0117	The University of East Anglia
0118	The University of Essex
0119	The University of Exeter
0120	The University of Hull
0121	The University of Keele
0122	The University of Kent
0123	The University of Lancaster
0124	The University of Leeds
0125	The University of Leicester
0126	The University of Liverpool
0127	Birkbeck College
0131	Goldsmiths College
0132	Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
0133	Institute of Education
0134	King's College London
0135	London Business School
0137	London School of Economics and Political Science
0138	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
0139	Queen Mary and Westfield College
0141	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
0143	The Royal Veterinary College
0145	St George's Hospital Medical School
0146	The School of Oriental and African Studies



0147	The School of Pharmacy
0149	University College London
0151	University of London (Institutes and activities)
0152	Loughborough University
0154	The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
0155	The University of Nottingham
0156	The University of Oxford
0157	The University of Reading
0158	The University of Salford
0159	The University of Sheffield
0160	The University of Southampton
0161	The University of Surrey
0162	The University of Sussex
0163	The University of Warwick
0164	The University of York
0167	The University of Edinburgh
0168	The University of Glasgow
0169	The University of Strathclyde
0170	The University of Aberdeen
0171	Heriot-Watt University
0172	The University of Dundee
0173	The University of St Andrews
0174	The University of Stirling

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0175	Scottish Agricultural College
0176	The University of Wales, Lampeter
0177	Aberystwyth University
0178	Bangor University
0179	Cardiff University
0180	Swansea University
0184	The Queen's University of Belfast
0185	University of Ulster
0186	The University of Wales (central functions)
0188	The Institute of Cancer Research
0189	Writtle College
0190	Norwich University College of the Arts
0193	Stranmillis University College
0194	St Mary's University College
0195	Royal Agricultural College
0196	UHI Millennium Institute
0197	The Arts University College at Bournemouth
0199	Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
0200	University College Birmingham
0201	Courtauld Institute of Art
0202	London Metropolitan University
0203	The University of Buckingham
0204	The University of Manchester
0205	Heythrop College

- 0206 University for the Creative Arts
- 0207 Leeds College of Music
- 0208 Guildhall School of Music and Drama
- 0209 The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts
- 0210 University Campus Suffolk

## Qualitative discussion guide used at HEI site visits

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Private & Confidential

J5120

Date 5/12/13

### BIS – Understanding Demand for Postgraduate Study Wave 2 Site-Visits Depth Interview Topic Guide (Version 1)

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION (5 mins)

*Stress confidentiality issues*

- Introduce self
- Introduce IFF Research – independent research company
- Explain Subject:
  - IFF Research has been commissioned by Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to explore changes in demand for postgraduate study over the last decade. The research study started last year in 2012 and we are now coming to the end of the fieldwork period.
  - You recently submitted an extensive dataset to IFF Research detailing demographic information relating to applications to study at postgraduate level at this HEI.
  - Based on the dataset provided, IFF Research have produced a brief report summarising the overall trends and patterns in applications to study at postgraduate level by key demographics.
  - We'd now like to discuss this summary with you to ensure that the patterns we have identified tie in with your experiences and to acquire further contextual information that might help to explain some of the changes seen in the profile of postgraduate applicants to your institution.
- Recording, confidentiality – MRS Code of Conduct and Data Protection
- Length: Approx. One and a half hours

## 2. Discussion of summary report: (45 minutes)

*The purpose of this section is to talk through the summary report of application data compiled by IFF Research for each of the HEIs participating in the Stage 2 site visits. The main aims of the discussion are to ensure that the reported trends are as the HEI expects; provide an opportunity for the respondent to offer further contextual information to explain the trends noted and where respondents disagree with the patterns observed, explain where and how this disparity arises.*

- **Outline amount of information supplied**
  - Academic years covered by application data provided
  - Limitations of data – whether any field(s) for which no / little data was provided
- **Discuss overall levels of application numbers in period covered**
- **Discuss patterns in applications by key demographics;**
  - Application rates by gender
  - Application rates by age
  - Application rates by mode of study
  - Application rates by disability status
  - Application rates by ethnicity
  - Application rates by funding status
  - Application rates by subject area
  - Application rates by qualification type
  - *Application rates by previous HEI*
  - *Application rates by date of previous qualification achieved*
  - Applications from existing students
  - Outcome of applications made

*Interviewer to refer to individual HEI summary report and invite respondent's opinion on patterns and trends documented in report. If respondent disagrees with patterns and trends observed, interviewer to note down areas where respondent disagrees, how and why.*

*After outlining main trends and patterns for each section, interviewer to refer to relevant*

### 3. Activities that have been undertaken to increase demand (15 mins)

*The purpose of this section is to acquire any further information about how postgraduate study has been marketed to potential applicants and the extent to which these marketing activities have impacted on, or skewed, the profile of those applying to study at the university.*

- **Can you tell me a bit more about any activities, that we haven't already discussed, that the HEI has undertaken to increase the number of candidates applying to study at postgraduate level?**

*PROBE:*

- What activities has the HEI undertaken? What else?
- Are there any types of applicants in terms of demographic profile that the HEI has sought to attract? IF YES: What types of applicant? Who else? Why these types of applicants specifically? What methods have been used to attract these specific candidates?
- Are there any qualification types that the HEI has promoted in particular over the period the data covers? Which qualifications? Why these types of qualifications?
- Are there any subject areas that the HEI has promoted in particular over the period the data covers? Which subjects? Why these subjects?

IF ANY ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN:

- **What has been the effect of these activities?**

*PROBE:*

- Which of these activities has had most impact? And which the least? Why do you think this is?
- Are there specific types of candidates who are harder or easier to attract to study at postgraduate level at the university? IF YES: Which type of candidate is harder to recruit? And which the easiest? Why is this? Has this always been the case, or has this changed with time?

#### 4. Overseas applications and the use of agents (15 mins)

*The purpose of this section is to acquire any further information about the use of international agents to recruit overseas students and determine to the extent to which agents influence the number and type of overseas applications received by HEIs.*

- **Can you tell me a bit more about how overseas students are recruited to your institution?**

*PROBE:*

- Can you outline the process from the point application on the part of the student to you as an HEI receiving that application?

- **Have you ever or do you currently use agents to recruit overseas students?**

*IF YES: PROBE:*

- Can you tell me a little more about how this works? What is the role of the agent? How important are they in determining the type of overseas candidate that applies to your HEI?
- In which locations do you have agents? Has the number of locations increased / decreased over time?
- For how long have you used agents for overseas applications?
- Has the way in which the institution uses an agent changed over time? *IF YES:* How has this changed? In what other ways?
- How do you think the use of an agent has affected the amount and type of postgraduate applications received by your HEI from overseas students? Why?
- Do you receive all applications submitted to agents or are some filtered out? *IF SOME FILTERED OUT:* Are there specific types of applications that are filtered out? *IF YES:* Which? What others? Why? Do you know what proportion of applications are filtered out?
- Do you get applications direct from overseas students as well as through agents? *IF YES:* What proportion of your overseas applications come through this route? Has this changed over time?

## 5. Perceived impact of fees over time (10 mins)

*The purpose of this section is to better understand the perceived impact of the increase in tuition fees for those enrolling in the 06/07 academic year; to provide some context as to how this change in the fee regime impacted specifically on postgraduate applications at the HEI and to encourage the respondent to consider the issues of increased tuition fees specifically in relation to the demand for postgraduate study.*

- **How do you think the increase in tuition fees for those enrolling in the 2006/07 academic year subsequently impacted on applications to study at postgraduate level at this HEI?**  
*PROBE:*
  - What was the most significant change in terms of the profile of postgraduate applicants as a result of the fee increase for the 2006/07 academic year?
  - In what other ways did this increase impact on the demand for postgraduate study?
  - How long did it take for the increase in fees at undergraduate level in 2006/07 to filter up to applications for postgraduate study?
  - Is the university still feeling the effect of this fee increase? In what ways?
  
- **How important do you consider the increase in tuition fees in 06/07 to be on the number and profile of applications to postgraduate study relative to specific marketing activities undertaken by the HEI?**  
*PROBE:*
  - What would you say has had the biggest impact on postgraduate applications to the university, fees or marketing activities? Why do you say this?



## 6. Anticipated future trends (15 mins)

*The purpose of this section is to encourage respondents to consider specifically the anticipated effect of the most recent increase in tuitions fees introduced for the 2012/13 cohort.*

- **How do you think the increase in tuition fees of up to £9,000 a year will impact on postgraduate applications?**

*PROBE:*

- How will the fee increase impact on the **number** of postgraduate applications?
- How will the fee increase impact on the **quality** of postgraduate applications?
- How will the fee increase impact on the demographic profile of postgraduate applicants? Who will be less likely to apply to study at postgraduate level? Why?
- Will any groups be more likely to apply? Who? Why?
- How do you think the fee change will impact on when people come to apply to postgraduate study?
- How do you think the fee change will impact on the types of postgraduate qualifications candidates apply for?
- How do you think the fee change will impact on the subjects candidates apply to?

- **How will this most recent change to the fee regime impact on postgraduate applications compared to that seen as a result of the fees introduced for the 2006/07 academic year?**

*PROBE:*

- Will the impact of this fee hike be more significant than that seen in relation to the 06/07 increase? Why / Why not? IF YES: In what ways?
- Will the impact of the new fee regime impact more quickly on postgraduate applications than seen previously? Why / why not?

- **How influential do you consider the most recent fee changes to be in determining the number and profile of postgraduate applications more generally? Will other factors have more of an effect on postgraduate applications in the coming years?**

*PROBE:*

- What other factors might impact on the demand for postgraduate study?
- What will be the most influential factor in determining the future postgraduate landscape?

## 7. Repeating the data collection exercise (10 mins)

*The purpose of this section is to gauge the amount of work required on the part of the HEIs to be able to participate in this study and whether they would be willing, in principle, to participate in a similar study in the future.*

- **We are extremely grateful for the work you have undertaken to be able to supply us with the information we requested for this study. Could you outline how easy or difficult a process this has been for your institution?**

*PROBE:*

- What were the main challenges faced by the HEI in providing the application information?
- Was there any assistance that the research agency or BIS could have provided to facilitate the process further? IF YES: What assistance would have been helpful?
- Would you be willing to speak with our client either over the phone or face-to-face to discuss the workload implications of having participated in this exercise? Please be assured that our client has not had and will not have access to your individual HEI application database at any point throughout the study. The main purpose of the conversation would be to help our client better understand the process involved in supplying the data and to inform the planning of future studies in this area.

## 8. Wrap-up (5 mins)

*The purpose of this section is to allow respondents to reflect on the session, raise any final points that they may wish to contribute and outline the final stages of the research project.*

- The next stage of the research will involve us combing the application data received from all participating HEIs and compile a report documenting trends and patterns in applications to postgraduate study by key demographics such as age, gender and ethnicity.
- The ultimate aim of the data analysis and report is to establish a baseline level of demand for postgraduate study against which future levels can be measured and the impact of rising fees better understood.
- We are due to present final findings to BIS in the autumn of this year.

I declare that this survey has been carried out under IFF instructions and within the rules of the MRS Code of Conduct.		
Moderator signature:	Date:	
Finish time:	Interview Length	Mins



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