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**INTRODUCTION**

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are well explained and readily accessible; are produced according to sound methods, and are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest. Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

**Coverage**

This statistical bulletin has been produced by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Northern Ireland (NI) and presents information on students enrolled at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK in 2012/13. The statistics presented in this bulletin cover a range of topics including changes over the last ten years, breakdown of the most recent enrolments, subject of study and where NI students go to study.

**Policy and Operational Context**

The Minister for Employment and Learning has responsibility within the NI Executive and to the NI Assembly for the NI Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their students; and for student support for NI-domiciled students in NI and the rest of the UK. The Assembly's DEL Committee has a scrutiny role in regard to these issues.

There continues to be a lot of media interest in the HE sector and HE statistics. With changes in fee regimes throughout the UK and the effect of the economic recession, the demand for HE is often in the spotlight.

It is within this context that DEL is implementing ‘Graduating to Success’, its Higher Education strategy which aims to promote and sustain the development of an internationally competitive sector, accessible to all who are able to benefit, and meeting the needs of the Northern Ireland economy and wider society. This bulletin forms part of the evidence base which shapes the future strategies and policies of DEL.

**Who will be interested in this bulletin?**

The information presented in this statistical bulletin will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example the statistics within and those derived from this bulletin are currently used by DEL policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for Employment and Learning to discharge his duties; by the NI Assembly and DEL committee to scrutinise the HE sector; by other government departments such as DFP as a key indicator in the education domain of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures; by prospective students to inform their choices around higher education; by local businesses to quantify the supply of graduates in their business area and by researchers and academics to try and understand the underlying trends in HE. Further details about the uses made of HE statistics can be found in the [notes and definitions](#notes) section below[.](#_top)

**Structure**

The bulletin is divided into two sections. Section 1 focuses on NI domiciled students enrolled at HEIs in NI, England, Scotland or Wales. Section 2 concentrates on all students enrolled at NI HEIs. This division into two sections reflects the two distinct policy and operational responsibilities of the Minister and the Department. Furthermore, it is clear from customer feedback, the nature of questions on HE asked in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and coverage of HE issues in the local media, for example, that these two aspects are of interest to readers. Therefore it has been decided to present breakdowns of information on HE along these two dimensions in this bulletin.

It is worth noting that there is a large overlap between Section 1 and Section 2, namely NI students enrolled at NI HEIs are included in both sections. See the diagram below for details:

**Diagram summarising the structure of the bulletin: Enrolments 2012/13**

Total – 64,400 Total – 51,715

Non NI students at NI HEIs

8,335

NI students

at Open University

4,445

NI students

at Great Britain (GB) HEIs

16,570

NI students

at NI HEIs

43,380

Section 1 – NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs – 2012/13

Section 2 – Enrolments at NI HEIs – 2012/13

**KEY STATISTICS**

**Section 1 - Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions**

* The number of NI students enrolled at HEIs in NI, England, Scotland and Wales increased by 2% over the past 10 years. Between 2011/12 and 2012/13 this figure has decreased by 2%.
* Of the 64,400 NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2012/13, 67% were enrolled at an NI HEI, 26% at an HEI in GB and 7% were studying through the Open University.
* The most popular regions for NI students who studied in GB were the North West of England and Scotland with 4,365 and 4,195 NI students enrolled at HEIs in each region respectively.
* Females accounted for 57% of NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2012/13.
* The number of NI students enrolled on full-time first year undergraduate courses at UK HEIs decreased by 7%, from 13,970 in 2011/12 to 12,985 in 2012/13.
* In 2012/13, 46% of NI students at UK HEIs were studying a Broad STEM[[1]](#footnote-1) related subject and 23% studying a Narrow STEM related subject.

**Section 2 - Enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions**

* Over the last ten academic years the total number of students enrolled at NI HEIs increased by 1%. Between 2011/12 and 2012/13 this figure has decreased by less than 1%.
* Of the 51,715 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2012/13, 84% were from NI, 5% from the Republic of Ireland (RoI), 4% from Great Britain (GB), 1% from other EU countries and 6% from non EU countries.
* In 2012/13 there were students enrolled at NI HEIs from over 100 different countries throughout the world.
* Females accounted for 57% of students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2012/13.
* The number of full-time first year undergraduate enrolments at NI HEIs decreased by 1% from 10,800 in 2011/12 to 10,650 in 2012/13.
* In 2012/13, 45% of NI HEIs students were studying a Broad STEM related subject and 22% studying a Narrow STEM related subject.

**SECTION 1: Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions (Tables 1 to 6)**

**1.1 Change over the last 10 years – 2003/04 to 2012/13 (Tables 1 & 2, Chart 1)**

* The number of NI students enrolled at HEIs in NI, England, Scotland and Wales increased by 2% over the past 10 years. However chart 1 illustrates that this increase has not been constant. Enrolments rose year on year from63,300 in 2003/04 to 65,730 in 2005/06. In the following year enrolments fell by 4% to 63,015 and decreased further to 62,300 in 2007/08, remaining at this level in 2008/09. Enrolments increased in the next three years of the period to 64,635 in 2009/10, 65,555 in 2010/11 and 65,590 in 2011/12.The number of enrolments then decreased by 2% in 2012/13 to 64,400.

* Proportionately more NI students now leave NI to study in GB than did a decade ago, increasing from 23% in 2003/04 to 26% in 2012/13.However, looking at the full-time first year undergraduate cohort alone, this proportion has only increased from 29% to 30% over the ten year period.
* Over the 10 year period the number of NI students going to GB to study increased by 13%, those studying through the Open University increased by 14% while NI students at NI HEIs decreased by 3%.
* In terms of level of study, ‘first degree’ courses have experienced the largest percentage increase, rising by 10% over the last ten years. In contrast, ‘postgraduate’ enrolments have decreased by 6% and the number of students enrolled on ‘other undergraduate’ courses (such as foundation degrees, diplomas, HNDs and HNCs) have fallen by 26%.
* Full-time enrolments rose by 7% over the decade, compared to a 9% decrease in part-time enrolments**.**

**1.2 Breakdown of enrolments – 2012/13 (Tables 1 to 4, Chart 2)**

* In 2012/13 there were 64,400 NI students enrolled at UK HEIs, a decrease of 2% from 2011/12.
* Mode of study – In 2012/13, 71% of enrolments were full-time and 29% were part-time. In comparison to 2011/12 full-time enrolments have decreased by 2% and part-time enrolments have decreased by 1%.
* Level of study – 74% of NI students were enrolled on a ‘first degree’ course, 11% on ‘other undergraduate’ courses and 15% on a ‘postgraduate’ course in 2012/13. ‘First degree’ enrolments have decreased by less than 1% while ‘other undergraduates’ and ‘postgraduates’ decreased by 7% and 5% respectively from the previous year.
* The number of NI domiciled full-time first year undergraduate enrolments at UK HEIs decreased by 7%, from 13,970 in 2011/12 to 12,985 in 2012/13.

Gender

* In recent history more females progress into higher education than males. In 2003/04 females made up 60% of NI students enrolled at UK HEIs. Ten years later in 2012/13 this proportion has shown little change with females representing 57% and males 43%. This gender gap does not begin at the point of entry to HE, but can be observed early on in the educational system. In NI, females are more likely to stay on in full-time education at age 16. They are more likely to be entered for A levels, more likely to pass them, and also more likely to do better (achieve an A grade, including A\*) than males. (Source: DENI Statistical Press Release : Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post Primary Schools in 2012/13)
* In 2012/13 a higher proportion of males (73%) were studying full-time in comparison to females (70%).
* A higher proportion of males than females were enrolled on ‘first degree’ courses in 2012/13 – 76% compared to 72%. Whereas females (12%) were more likely than males (11%) to be undertaking an ‘other undergraduate’ course. Females (16%) were also more likely than males (14%) to be enrolled on ‘postgraduate’ courses.

Age

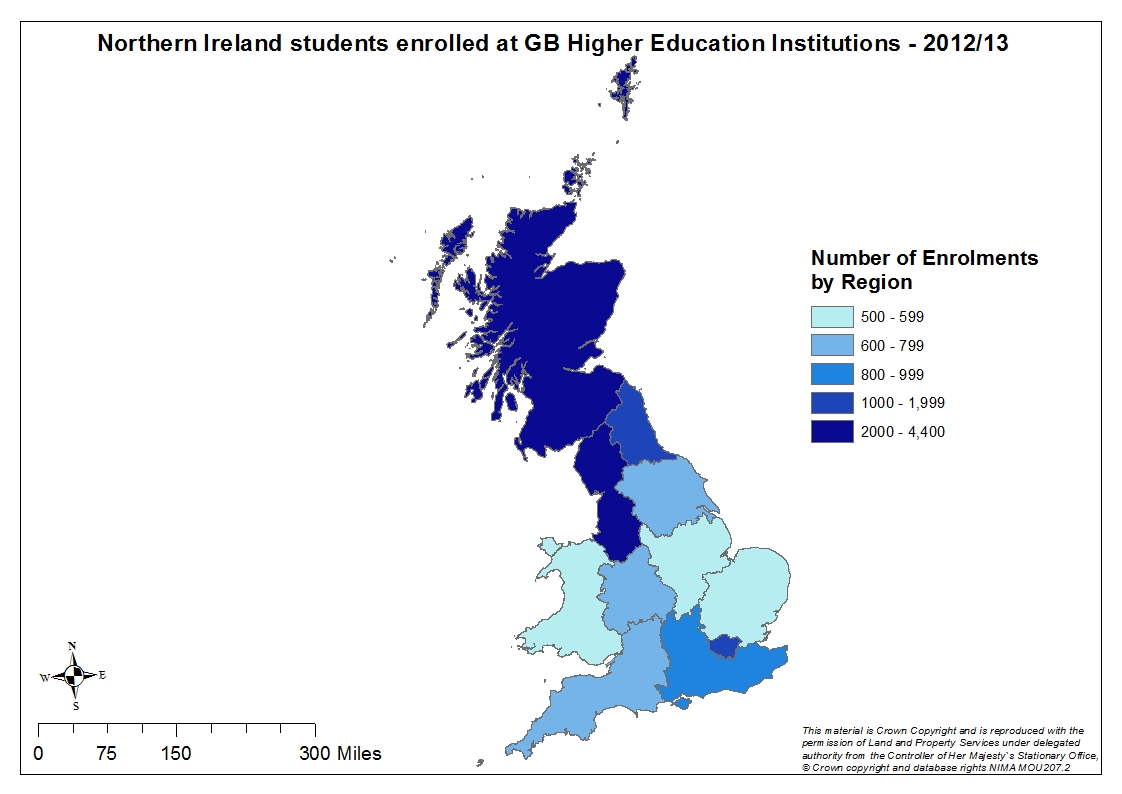
* Chart 2 below illustrates the age breakdown of NI students and how this differs by mode and level of study. In 2012/13, 42% of NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs were aged ‘under 21’, 28% were aged ‘21 to 24’ and 30% were aged ‘25 and over’.



* The majority of younger students (those aged under 21) tend to enter HE straight from school and continue to study on a full-time basis. Older students (aged 25 and over) are more likely to study part-time. Many older students are combining work with part-time study and see HE as a way to develop their career, or to enable them to change to a different career. Approximately 94% of NI students aged ‘under 21’ were enrolled on a full-time ‘first degree’ course, as were 72% of those aged ’21 to 24’. In comparison the majority, 54%, of those aged ‘25+’ were enrolled on part-time ‘postgraduate’ or ‘other undergraduate’ courses.

**1.3 Location of Study (Tables 1 to 3 & 5)**

* There are various reasons why students leave NI to study, including their choice of subject, for example some courses such as veterinary science are not supplied in Northern Ireland. It is also clear from recent research[[2]](#footnote-2) that the majority of those who plan to leave NI to study do so out of choice. However, figures from the latest Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey[[3]](#footnote-3) show that around 57% of full-time students who left NI to study in GB did not return to NI to work six months after qualifying. The following points highlight how many students leave NI to study and where in GB they go.



* Of the 64,400 NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2012/13, 67% were enrolled at an NI HEI, 26% at an HEI in GB and 7% were studying through the Open University.
* 16,570 NI students were studying at an HEI in GB in 2012/13. The map above illustrates how many NI students were studying in each region of GB. The darker the shade of blue the higher the number of NI students enrolled at an HEI in that region.
* The most popular regions for NI students who studied in GB were the North West of England and Scotland with 4,365 and 4,195 NI students enrolled at HEIs in each region respectively. Other popular regions were the North East of England with 1,830 NI students and London with 1,255.
* Table 5 provides a list of the top 20 most popular HEIs for NI students in 2012/13. In Scotland the HEIs with the most NI students were the University of Glasgow (750), the University of Dundee (725) and the University of Edinburgh (445). In the North West, Liverpool John Moores University alone had 1,405 NI student enrolments, making it the most popular HEI in GB for NI students. In the North East, the University of Northumbria at Newcastle had 950 students from NI. In fact it is worth noting that NI students are enrolled at 160 of the 164 publicly funded HEIs in the UK.
* In terms of gender, males are proportionately more likely to study in GB than females, with 27% of NI domiciled males enrolled at a GB HEI, compared to 25% of females.
* Of the 12,985 NI domiciled full-time first year undergraduate enrolments at UK HEIs in 2012/13, 70% were enrolled at an NI HEI and 30% were enrolled at an HEI in GB. This has changed from 64% and 36% in the previous academic year.

**1.4 Subject of Study (Table 6, Chart 3)**

* The number one priority identified within the Programme for Government by the NI Executive is to grow a sustainable economy and invest in the future. To help achieve this, a target has been set to increase the uptake in economically relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM[[4]](#footnote-4)) places in education. The points below highlight the proportion of students undertaking STEM subjects and what other subject areas are popular with NI students.
* In 2012/13, 46% of NI students at UK HEIs were studying a Broad STEM related subject.A higher proportion of males than females were studying Broad STEM subjects, 51% compared to 42%. Full-time students (52%) were more likely to be studying Broad STEM subjects than part-time students (31%).
* In 2012/13, 23% of NI students at UK HEIs were studying a Narrow STEM related subject.A higher proportion of males than females were studying Narrow STEM subjects, 34% compared to 15%. Full-time students (27%) were more likely to be studying Narrow STEM subjects than part-time students (14%).
* In 2012/13, the most popular subject areas of NI students studying at UK HEIs were ‘subjects allied to medicine’ (which includes subjects such as Nursing, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy) with 8,540 enrolments and ‘business & administrative studies’ (which includes subjects such as business studies, management studies, accounting, marketing and finance) with 7,860 enrolments.
* Chart 3 below displays the number of NI students enrolled in each subject area by gender. Females accounted for 82% of enrolments in ‘subjects allied to medicine’, 71% of those studying ‘education’ and 69% of those studying ‘languages’. Males accounted for 83% of those studying ‘engineering & technology’, 77% of ‘computer science’ enrolments and 72% of ‘architecture, building & planning’ enrolments.



**SECTION 2: Enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions**

**(Tables 7 to 13)**

**2.1 Change over the last 10 years – 2003/04 to 2012/13 (Tables 7 & 8, Chart 4)**

* Over the last ten academic years the total number of students enrolled at NI HEIs increased by 1%. Chart 4 below illustrates the pattern of the change in enrolments over this period. Enrolments rose from 51,025 in 2003/04 to 52,930 in 2004/05. Enrolments levelled off at 52,845 in 2005/06. In the following year NI HEIs experienced a sharp decline of approximately 4,000 enrolments, followed by a further fall in 2007/08 with figures levelling off at 48,240 in 2008/09. The next two academic years saw an increase in enrolments to approximately 50,990 in 2009/10 and 52,000 in 2010/11 followed by a small decrease to 51,905 in 2011/12 and a further decrease to 51,715 in 2012/13.



* Students from NI now make up a smaller proportion of the total population of students at NI HEIs than they did 10 years ago. In 2003/04 students from NI made up 88% of the total population of students at NI HEIs. In 2012/13 this figure has decreased to 84%. Over this period NI HEIs have seen a large increase in students from outside NI. The number of students from both GB (950 to 2,000) and Non EU countries (1,370 to 3,160), increased by over 100% while students from RoI decreased by 21% and other EU countries by 2%.
* The large increase in Non EU students is largely due to there being 1,470 full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled on courses that have been jointly developed by the University of Ulster and the Queen Anne Business School in Birmingham (355) and London (1,110). Although these students are based in Birmingham and London they are registered as University of Ulster students.
* In terms of level of study, both ‘first degree’ and ‘postgraduate’ enrolments experienced increases of 6% over the 10 year period. In contrast the number of students enrolled on ‘other undergraduate’ courses (such as foundation degrees, diplomas, HNDs and HNCs) have fallen by 22%.
* The number of full-time enrolments increased by 8% over the last 10 years, compared to a 12% decrease in part-time enrolments.

**2.2 Breakdown of enrolments – 2012/13 (Tables 7 to 10, Chart 5)**

* In 2012/13, there were 51,715 students enrolled at NI HEIs, showing a decrease of less than 1% from 2011/12.
* Mode of study – In 2012/13, 71% of enrolments were full-time and 29% were part-time. In comparison to 2011/12, both full-time and part-time enrolments have decreased by less than 1%.
* Level of study – In 2012/13, 67% of students were enrolled on a ‘first degree’ course, 12% on ‘other undergraduate’ courses and 21% on a ‘postgraduate’ course. Between 2011/12 and 2012/13, ‘first degree’ enrolments have increased by 1%, ‘other undergraduates’ have decreased by 1% and ‘postgraduates’ decreased by 3%.
* The number of full-time first year undergraduate enrolments at NI HEIs decreased by 1% from 10,800 in 2011/12 to 10,650 in 2012/13.

Gender

* In recent history more females progress into higher education than males. This gender gap does not begin at the point of entry to HE, but can be observed early on in the educational system. In NI, girls are more likely to stay on in full-time education at age 16. They are more likely to be entered for A levels, more likely to pass them, and also more likely to do better (achieve an A grade, including A\*) than boys. (Source: DENI Statistical Press Release : Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post Primary Schools in 2012/13)
* Of the 51,715 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2012/13, 57% were female and 43% were male.
* A higher proportion of males (75%) were studying full-time in comparison to females (68%).
* Males (70%) were more likely to be undertaking a ‘first degree’ course than females (65%), while a higher proportion of females (13%) were enrolled on an ‘other undergraduate’ course than males (11%) and on ‘postgraduate’ courses, 19% of males and 23% of females.

Age

* Chart 5 below illustrates the age breakdown of students at NI HEIs and how this differs by mode and level of study. In 2012/13, 38% of students enrolled at NI HEIs were aged ‘under 21’, 28% were aged ‘21 to 24’ and 34% were ‘25 and over’.



* The majority of younger students (those aged under 21) tend to enter HE straight from school and continue to study on a full-time basis. Older students (aged 25 and over) are more likely to study part-time. Many older students are combining work with part-time study and see HE as a way to develop their career, or to enable them to change to a different career. Approximately 92% of students at NI HEIs aged ‘under 21’ were enrolled on a full-time ‘first degree’ course, as were 68% of those aged ’21 to 24’. In comparison the majority, 58%, of those aged ‘25+’ were enrolled on part-time ‘postgraduate’ or ‘other undergraduate’ courses.

**2.3 Country of Domicile (Tables 7 to 9, Chart 6)**

* Over the last 10 years NI HEIs have experienced a large increase in the number of enrolments in students from outside NI. The following points highlight which countries these students come from and what types of courses they are engaged in.
* Of the 51,715 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2012/13, 84% were from NI, 5% from the Republic of Ireland (RoI), 4% from Great Britain (GB), 1% from other EU countries and 6% from non EU countries.

\*Of the Non EU and GB enrolments, **1,470** full time Non EU and **25** GB enrolled on courses that have been jointly developed by the University of Ulster and the Queen Anne Business School in Birmingham and London. Although these students were based in Birmingham and London they were registered as University of Ulster students.

**HE Enrolments at campuses in NI by country of domicile – 2012/13**

NI – 84%

43,380

RoI – 5%

2,835

GB – 4%

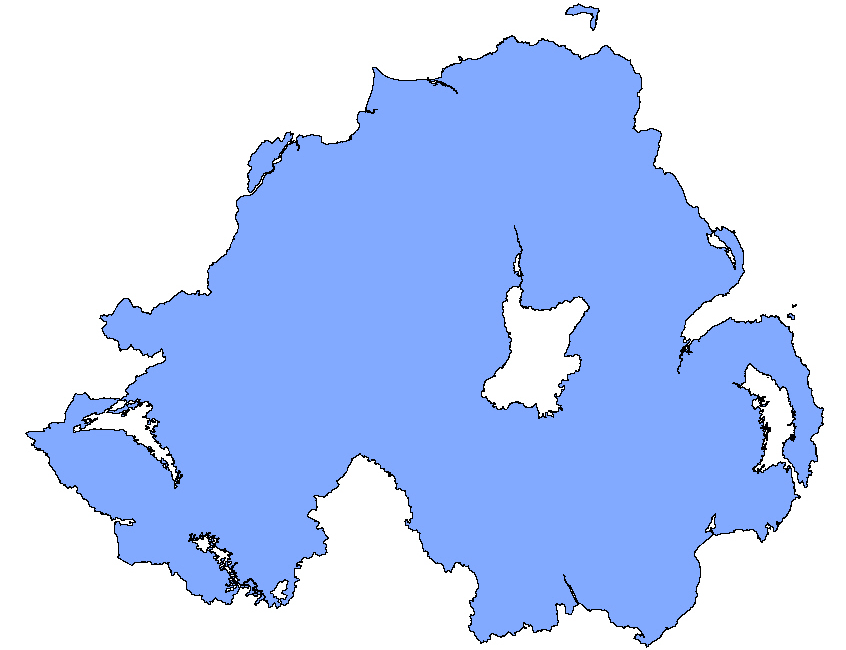
2,000\*

Non EU – 6%

3,160\*

Other EU - 1%

340



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* The countries from outside NI, GB and the RoI which had the most students enrolled at campuses in NI in 2012/13 were China - 590, Malaysia – 240, United States – 180, India - 95 and Germany - 95. In fact in 2012/13 there were students enrolled at NI HEIs from over 100 different countries throughout the world.
* The 1,470 Non EU students registered to the University of Ulster but based in Birmingham and London were made up of students from around 50 different countries. The countries with the most students where China – 515, Bangladesh – 215, Sri Lanka – 165, India – 115 and Pakistan – 105.

* The chart below illustrates the contrast in level of study for NI students and those from other countries. The majority of students at NI HEIs from outside NI are enrolled on ‘postgraduate’ or ‘other undergraduate’ courses, whereas the majority of students from NI are enrolled on ‘first degree’ courses.



**2.4 Subject of Study (Table 11, Chart 7)**

* The number one priority identified within the Programme for Government by the NI Executive is to grow a sustainable economy and invest in the future. To help achieve this, a target has been set to increase the uptake in economically relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM[[5]](#footnote-5)) places in education. The following points highlight the proportion of students studying STEM and how subject choice varies by gender.
* In 2012/13, 45% of students at NI HEIs were studying a Broad STEM related subject.A higher proportion of males were studying Broad STEM subjects - 49%, compared to 43% of females. Full-time students (51%) were more likely to be studying Broad STEM subjects than part-time students (31%).
* In 2012/13, 22% of students at NI HEIs were studying a Narrow STEM related subject.A higher proportion of males were studying Narrow STEM subjects - 33%, compared to 14% of females. Full-time students (27%) were more likely to be studying Narrow STEM subjects than part-time students (9%).
* In 2012/13 the most popular subject areas which students were studying at NI HEIs were ‘business & administrative studies’ (which includes subjects such as business studies, management studies, accounting, marketing and finance) with 8,460 enrolments, ‘subjects allied to medicine’ (which includes subjects such as Nursing, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy) with 7,710 enrolments and ‘education’ with 6,220 enrolments.
* The chart below displays the number of students enrolled at NI HEIs in each subject area by gender. Females accounted for 84% of enrolments in ‘subjects allied to medicine’, 71% of those studying ‘languages’ and 70% of those studying ‘education’. Males accounted for 82% of those studying ‘engineering & technology’, 75% of ‘computer science’ enrolments and 71% of ‘architecture, building & planning’ enrolments.



**2.5** **Institutional breakdown (Table 12, Chart 8)**

* Of all students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2012/13, 51% were enrolled at the University of Ulster, 44% at the Queen’s University Belfast, 3% at Stranmillis University College and 2% at St Mary’s University College.
* University of Ulster enrolments decreased by less than 1% between 2011/12 and 2012/13 to 26,460. Full-time enrolments decreased by 1% while part-time increased by 1%. The number of full time students enrolled on courses jointly developed by the University of Ulster and the Queen Anne Business School in Birmingham and London, and based in Birmingham and London, increased from 1,105 in 2011/12 to 1,490 in 2012/13. The number of full-time enrolments based in NI decreased by 3%. ‘First degree’ and ‘postgraduate’ enrolments decreased by less than 1% while ‘other undergraduate’ decreased by 2%.
* Enrolments at Queen’s University Belfast decreased by 1% between 2011/12 and 2012/13 to 22,700. Full-time enrolments increased by less than 1% while part-time enrolments decreased by 5%. ‘First degree’ enrolments increased by 2% between 2011/12 and 2012/13, while ‘postgraduate’ enrolments decreased by 10% and all ‘other undergraduates’ decreased by 1%.
* Enrolments at Stranmillis University College increased by 9% from 1,340 in 2011/12 to 1,460 in 2012/13. This increase can be attributed to part-time enrolments where there was an increase of 39%, while full-time enrolments decreased by 4%. ‘First degree’ enrolments decreased by 3% over this period while ‘other undergraduate’ (18%) and ‘postgraduate’ (92%) enrolments increased.
* The number of students at St. Mary’s University College increased by 8% from 1,020 in 2011/12 to 1,100 in 2012/13. This increase can be attributed to part-time enrolments which rose by 58%, full-time enrolments decreased by less than 1%. ‘First degree’ enrolments decreased by 1% while ‘postgraduate’ enrolments increased by 59%. There were no ‘other undergraduates’ at this institution.



**2.6 UK Comparison (Table 13, Chart 9)**

* In 2012/13 there were just over 2.3 million students enrolled at HEIs throughout the UK. In comparison to 2011/12 student numbers have decreased by 6%.
* Over the same time period enrolments in all countries experienced decreases. Enrolments at English HEIs and Welsh HEIs fell by 6% and 2% respectively, while enrolments at NI HEIs decreased by less than 1%.Enrolments at Scottish HEIs and the Open University fell by 1% and 16% respectively.
* Chart 9 below illustrates the percentage change in enrolments over the last year for each location and for each level of study. NI and Scotland, experienced small percentage increases in ‘first degree’ enrolments while the other regions ‘first degree’ enrolments decreased.The number of ‘other undergraduate’ and ‘postgraduate enrolments fell in all locations.



* Full-time enrolments fell in all locations. NI, Scotland and Wales decreased by less than 1% while England and the Open University decreased by 3% and 1% respectively. The number of part-time enrolments also fell in all locations, decreasing by 6% in Wales, 16% in the Open University, 17% in England, 3% in Scotland and less than 1% in NI.

**NOTES AND DEFINITIONS**

#### NOTES:

1. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are well explained and readily accessible; are produced according to sound methods, and are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest. Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.
2. The data presented in this bulletin are based on data supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). HESA is the official agency for the collection of information on publicly funded Higher Education (HE) institutions in the UK. It was set up in 1993 following the White Paper ‘Higher Education: a new framework’, which called for more coherence in HE statistics. HE institutions include all publicly-funded universities. The HESA data presented in this bulletin relate to students at HE institutions in the UK and therefore do not include HE enrolments at FE colleges in NI or GB, or at institutions in the Republic of Ireland.
3. A new specification of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Standard Registration Population was introduced for 2007/08 enrolments and onwards. Writing up and sabbatical students are now excluded from this population where they were previously included in published enrolment data. In order to maintain time series accuracy, all historical data will now use the 2007/08 definition of the Standard Registration Population (excluding writing up and sabbatical students.) As a result, enrolment data may not match other published HESA data prior to 2007/08.

The table below shows the change in figures when comparing the old and new definition of the HESA Standard Registration Population for enrolments at NI HEIs:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Enrolments at NI HEIs | | % Change |
| Old Definition | New Definition |
| 2002/03 | 50,555 | 49,125 | -2.8% |
| 2003/04 | 52,405 | 51,025 | -2.6% |
| 2004/05 | 54,495 | 52,930 | -2.9% |
| 2005/06 | 54,625 | 52,845 | -3.3% |
| 2006/07 | 50,325 | 48,860 | -2.9% |

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

1. There has been a change to the format of the Higher Education enrolments statistical bulletins for the 2008/09 academic year and onwards. The bulletin now contains HESA data only (i.e. data on enrolments at UK HEIs only). Information on enrolments on HE courses at NI and GB FECs, RoI institutions and The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) are available via a separate statistical fact sheet which is published on the Department’s website ([www.delni.gov.uk/higher-education-statistical-fact-sheets.htm](http://www.delni.gov.uk/higher-education-statistical-fact-sheets.htm)).
2. The 2008/09 HESA student record contained 270 students enrolled at a HE institution in NI whose domicile had been incorrectly recorded as ‘Non EU’. The HE Institution later confirmed that the domicile for these students should have been NI. The error has been corrected for the data used in this bulletin, however, care must be taken when comparing 2008/09 data with data supplied by HESA. This error was not identified until after the HESA reporting deadline and therefore has not been corrected for HESA publications.
3. The 2006/07 HESA student record contained 955 students enrolled at a HE Institution in NI whose domicile had been recorded as unknown. The HE Institution later confirmed that the domicile for these students should have been NI. The error has been corrected for the data used in this bulletin, however, care must be taken when comparing 2006/07 data with data supplied by HESA. This error was not identified until after the HESA reporting deadline and therefore has not been corrected for HESA publications.
4. A change in reporting practice at a HE institution in NI has contributed to the large decrease that has been observed in the number of postgraduate students in 2006/07 compared to previous years. It means that the number of postgraduate students (or totals containing postgraduate figures) in 2006/07 cannot be compared accurately with data for previous years.
5. From 2002/03 subject area groups have changed due to a new common subject coding system (JACS) in which enrolments are aggregated to 19 broad subject areas. Although the new subject areas look similar and are closely related to the subject areas used in previous years, the new system is not by any means identical, as the subject categories within each group may have changed. In addition a new procedure for apportioning students to subject areas was introduced in 2002/03.
6. **Rounding strategy** - To prevent the identification of individuals, figures in the attached tables are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, 2 rounded to 0. Due to rounding the sum of numbers in each row or column may not match the total shown. Percentages are based on the unrounded figures.
7. **UK comparison** – Summary figures for the four UK administrations were published by HESA on 16th January 2014. This document can be viewed at the following page –

[http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/2667/](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/2355/161/)

More in depth reports for England, Scotland and Wales can be downloaded from the following pages:

England - [www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-education/research-analysis](http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-education/research-analysis)

Scotland - [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Lifelong-learning](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Lifelong-learning)

Wales - [wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/post16ed/higher-educa](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/post16ed/higher-educa)

1. **Further statistics** on the Northern Ireland higher education sector, including qualification gained, graduate destinations and various higher education fact sheets can be downloaded from the Department’s website: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/higher-education-stats>
2. **Guidance on the production of HE statistics** - Information on methods for collecting and analysing HE data, the quality of HE statistics, and links to the quality guidance used in managing the production of higher education statistics can be accessed on our statistics guidance page - [www.delni.gov.uk/he-statistical-methods.htm](http://www.delni.gov.uk/he-statistical-methods.htm)
3. **Uses made of HE statistics**

This bulletin is disseminated directly to approximately 100 users. In addition, it is also published on the Department’s website and the UK National Statistics publication hub ([www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html)). Users include policy colleagues in DEL, academics, researchers, members of the public, the NI Assembly, other government departments and other interested parties and individuals.

The bulletin and further analysis of the data provide an evidence base that is used in a number of DEL policies, strategies and reviews. Some of the most recent examples are: -

* DEL’s Higher Education Strategy
* DEL’s Widening Participation Strategy
* Independent Review of Variable Fees
* Research Study on Future Skill Needs in NI Financial Services

Further details on these strategies are available from the DEL website: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education/higher-education.htm>

In addition, HE data are used within other NI departments and their agencies. Some of the most recent examples are: -

* DFP - as a key indicator in the Education Domain of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure.
* DE – teacher demand model
* Invest NI – to quantify the supply of graduates for potential inward investment to NI

Almost 300 HE statistical enquiries per year are received by the Department from various sources. These include requests for further breakdowns of enrolments, qualifications and destinations data.

In addition, approximately 25 assembly questions (either written or oral), relating to HE data, are received by the Department each year.

1. **Government Targets**

Data from this bulletin are used in the measurement of the following key commitment as set in the Northern Ireland Executive’s Programme for Government:

Programme for Government – 2011-15

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>

Increase uptake in economically relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) places (DEL).

#### DEFINITIONS:

## Higher Education

1. Higher education students for the purpose of HESA's data collection are those students on courses for which the level of instruction is above that of level 3 of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (e.g. courses at the level of Certificate of HE and above).

## Count of Students

1. The HESA Student Record contains information about individual enrolments which, because a student can be enrolled on more than one programme of study, will exceed the number of students.
2. HESA data are a count of enrolments across the entire academic year as opposed to a snapshot of enrolments on the 1st December (which was the basis of the student count in HE statistical publications published by the Department prior to 2002/03).

**Academic year**

1. The academic year runs from 1st August to 31st July.

## First year students

1. First year students are based on the HESA standard registration population who commenced their instance in the reporting period relevant to the data collection year. The term 'instance' is used to describe a student's engagement with the Institution aiming towards the award of a qualification(s) or credit.

## Domicile

1. Domicile refers to a student’s permanent place of residence prior to enrolment on an HE course.

1. Student enrolments recorded with domicile UK region unknown, Channel Islands and Isle of Man are included in the GB category for the purposes of this statistical bulletin.

## Level of course

1. Level of study
   1. *Postgraduate* programmes of study are those leading to higher degrees, diplomas and certificates (including Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and professional qualifications) and usually require that entrants are already qualified to degree level (i.e. already qualified at level 6 of the QCA National Qualifications Framework).
   2. *First degree* includes first degrees with or without eligibility to register to practice with a health or social care or veterinary statutory regulatory body, first degrees with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)/registration with a General Teaching Council (GTC), enhanced first degrees, first degrees obtained concurrently with a diploma and intercalated first degrees.
   3. *Foundation degrees* were first introduced in September 2001. They are vocational higher education qualifications and are at level 5 of the QCA National Qualifications Framework.
   4. *Other undergraduate* includes qualification aims equivalent to and below first degree level, such as Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), foundation degrees, diplomas in HE with eligibility to register to practice with a Health or Social Care or veterinary statutory regulatory body, Higher National Diploma (HND), Higher National Certificate (HNC), Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), foundation courses at HE level, NVQ/SVQ levels 4 and 5, post-degree diplomas and certificates at undergraduate level, professional qualifications at undergraduate level, other undergraduate diplomas and certificates including post registration health and social care courses, other formal HE qualifications of less than degree standard, institutional undergraduate credit and no formal undergraduate qualifications.

## Mode of attendance

1. Mode of attendance distinguishes students studying full-time or part-time:
   1. *Full-time* students are those normally required to attend an Institution for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of study, on thick or thin sandwich courses, and those on a study-related year out of their institution. During that time students are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition or work experience which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.
   2. *Part-time* students are those recorded as studying part-time, or studying full-time on courses lasting less than 24 weeks, on block release, or studying during the evenings only.

## Age

1. Age is as at 31st August within the relevant academic year.

## Gender

1. From 2007/08, the field ‘gender’ changed to be consistent with the Aligned Data Definitions adopted by the Information Standards Board for education, skills, and children’s services. Students of ‘indeterminate gender’ are included in total figures but not in separate breakdowns.

**STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Enrolments**

1. Broad STEM includes the following subject areas: Medicine & Dentistry, Subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture & related subjects, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology and Architecture, Building & Planning.

Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM and includes the following subject areas: Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology.

**The Open University (OU)**

1. The Open University is defined as an English Institution. The administrative centre is located in England, although it teaches throughout the UK. For the purposes of this statistical bulletin the Open University is reported separately from other English HEIs.

**Media enquiries should be made to the Department’s Press Office in Adelaide House, 39-49 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FD, telephone (028) 9025 7793**

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1. Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – see notes to readers for full description. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.delni.gov.uk/after_school.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [www.delni.gov.uk/he\_destination\_of\_leavers.htm](http://www.delni.gov.uk/he_destination_of_leavers.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths – see notes to readers for full description. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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