

Key points for Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2002/03 to 2014/15

Enrolments have decreased in recent years.

Between 2002/03 and 2010/11 enrolments increased year on year. However, since 2011/12, enrolments in Essential Skills have started to decrease. Over the past academic year, the number of Essential Skills enrolments decreased by 11.4% from 45,803 in 2013/14 to 40,589 in 2014/15, but still remains higher than totals in 2008/09 and earlier academic years.

There has been a shift towards Numeracy being the most popular subject in recent years....

While Literacy has been the most popular Essentials Skills subject (40.7%) over the course of the strategy, from 2007/08 onwards, Numeracy has accounted for the largest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments in each year. The most recent academic year indicates that Numeracy accounts for 36.7%, Literacy for 33.7% and ICT for 29.6% of Essential Skills enrolments.

...more males enrolled in each of the three subjects...

Over the 13 year period, 53.1% of the students on Essential Skills Literacy courses have been male. There were more males enrolled than females across the three subjects: Literacy (55.3%); ICT (52.9%) and Numeracy (50.9%).

... and students are consistently young (16-25).

Since the strategy began, in each academic year the highest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments was for those aged '16-25', ranging from 34.3% to 84.1% across various years.

There are increases of Economically Inactive individuals enrolling....

Over the course of the strategy, the proportion of enrolments where the status of employment was reported as 'economically inactive' has generally been increasing year on year, from 12.8% in 2002/03 to 43.0% in 2014/15.

....and more are studying at level 2.

Since the start of the strategy, the proportion of Essential Skills enrolments at 'Level 2' has generally been increasing from 7.0% in 2002/03 to 43.0% in 2014/15. Since 2009/10 proportions of Essential Skills enrolments at 'Level 1' have been decreasing from 52.9% to 44.6% in 2013/14.

A higher proportion of enrolments are from the most deprived areas in NI.

In the most recent academic year, 27.2% of enrolments were from the most deprived areas, while only 10.3% of enrolments were from the least deprived areas.

Qualifications have also recently decreased.

Between 2013/14 and 2014/15 the number of qualifications gained decreased by 23.0%, from 40,851 to 31,456 respectively.

The majority of students gain a qualification.

Overall, almost two thirds (63.9%) of Essential Skills enrolments resulted in a qualification. For Numeracy enrolments, the success rate was 66.7%, while for Literacy it was 66.1% and 53.7% for ICT enrolments.