

## Enrolments at UK Higher Education Institutions:

### Northern Ireland analysis – 2017/18

This statistical bulletin has been produced by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and provides information on the number of Northern Ireland (NI) students enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the number of students enrolled at NI HEIs.

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- Over the past decade, the number of NI students enrolled at UK HEIs increased initially, from 62,265 in 2008/09 to a peak of 65,590 in 2011/12, before falling gradually to 62,930 in 2017/18, largely related to a decline in part-time enrolments (Tables 1a and 1b).
- Of the 62,930 NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2017/18, 72.3% were enrolled at NI HEIs (including 5.9% studying locally at the Open University) and 27.7% at HEIs in GB (a 10-year high) (Table 1a).
- In 2017/18, 49.4% of NI domiciled students at UK HEIs were studying a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (Broad STEM) related subject and 26.8% a Narrow STEM related subject (Table 7a).
- While there has been a 0.2% (110) decrease between 2016/17 (54,570) and 2017/18 (54,460), student enrolments at NI HEIs have increased by a net 3.8% (2,010) over the past decade (from 52,450 in 2008/09) (Tables 8f and 8g).
- Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the number of first year undergraduates enrolling at NI HEIs decreased by 1.2%, from 16,800 to 16,590; however, following the recent introduction of postgraduate loans, first year postgraduate enrolments increased by 12.4% over this period (from 6,170 to 6,930), notably a 44.7% increase in full-time Higher degree (taught) enrolments (from 1,715 to 2,480) (Tables 9b and 9e).
- Of the 54,460 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18, 83.5% were from NI, 3.9% from the Republic of Ireland, 5.9% from GB, 0.8% from other EU countries and 5.9% from non-EU countries (Table 8a).

## READER INFORMATION

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Reader Information</a> .....	Page 2
<a href="#">Table of Contents</a> .....	Page 3
<a href="#">List of Figures</a> .....	Page 4
<a href="#">Statistics and Research Branch</a> .....	Page 5
<a href="#">Key Statistics</a> .....	Page 6
<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	Page 8
<a href="#">Structure of Report</a> .....	Page 12
<b><a href="#">Section 1: Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions</a></b> .....	Page 13
<a href="#">1.1 Change over the last 10 years</a> .....	Page 13
<a href="#">1.2 Breakdown of enrolments</a> .....	Page 14
<a href="#">1.3 Location of study</a> .....	Page 15
<a href="#">1.4 Multiple Deprivation Measure quintiles</a> .....	Page 17
<a href="#">1.5 Subject of study</a> .....	Page 17
<b><a href="#">Section 2: Enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions</a></b> .....	Page 19
<a href="#">2.1 Change over the last 10 years</a> .....	Page 19
<a href="#">2.2 Breakdown of enrolments</a> .....	Page 20
<a href="#">2.3 Country of domicile</a> .....	Page 21
<a href="#">2.4 Subject of study</a> .....	Page 23
<a href="#">2.5 Institutional breakdown</a> .....	Page 24
<a href="#">2.6 UK comparison</a> .....	Page 26
<a href="#">Notes and definitions</a> .....	Page 28
<a href="#">List of tables (available at link below)</a> .....	Page 33
<a href="#">Detailed Excel tables (External link)</a>	

## LIST OF FIGURES

<a href="#">Figure 1</a> – NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs – 2008/09 to 2017/18 ....	Page 13
<a href="#">Figure 2</a> – NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by age group, mode and level of study – 2017/18 .....	Page 15
<a href="#">Figure 3</a> – NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and multiple deprivation measure quintiles – 2017/18 .....	Page 17
<a href="#">Figure 4</a> – NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by sex and subject area – 2017/18 .....	Page 18
<a href="#">Figure 5</a> – Enrolments at NI HEIs – 2008/09 to 2017/18 .....	Page 19
<a href="#">Figure 6</a> – Enrolments at NI HEIs by age group, mode and level of study – 2017/18 .....	Page 21
<a href="#">Figure 7</a> – Enrolments at NI HEIs by domicile and level of study – 2017/18 .....	Page 23
<a href="#">Figure 8</a> – Enrolments at NI HEIs by sex and subject area – 2017/18 .....	Page 24
<a href="#">Figure 9</a> – Enrolments at NI HEIs by institution and level of study – 2017/18 .....	Page 26
<a href="#">Figure 10</a> – Percentage change in enrolments at UK HEIs by level of study and location of institution – 2016/17 to 2017/18 .....	Page 27
<a href="#">Map 1</a> – Northern Ireland students enrolled at GB Higher Education Institutions – 2017/18 .....	Page 16
<a href="#">Map 2</a> – HE Enrolments at campuses in NI by country of domicile – 2017/18.....	Page 22

Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education) is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Further Education (FE) colleges across Northern Ireland (NI) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), focused on NI HEIs and NI domiciled students in attendance at any UK HEI. Statistical information is collected routinely from a variety of electronic individual level administrative systems.

The Head of Branch is the Principal Statistician, Brian French. The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the Economy Committee, FE colleges, universities, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within the DfE, other educational organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations, as well as the general public.

The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on the performance of the Higher Education (HE) and FE sectors, other comparative performance exercises, target setting and monitoring, departmental research projects, development of service frameworks, as well as policy formulation and evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a significantly high volume of Assembly questions and ad hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through a number of key statistical publications, including: HE enrolments; HE qualifications; Destinations of leavers from Higher Education (DLHE); FE activity; and Essential Skills enrolments and outcomes.

A detailed list of these publications is available from:

**Website:** <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-economic-research/higher-and-further-education-and-training-statistics>

## KEY STATISTICS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND DOMICILED ENROLMENTS AT UK HEIs

<b>Over the past decade, NI student enrolments at UK HEIs increased initially, before declining again...</b>	Over the past decade, the number of NI students enrolled at UK HEIs increased initially, from 62,265 in 2008/09 to a peak of 65,590 in 2011/12, before falling gradually to 62,930 in 2017/18, largely related to a decline in part-time enrolments; this included a 0.2% (140) decrease in total enrolments between 2016/17 (63,070) and 2017/18 (62,930) (Tables 1a and 1b).
<b>Most NI students study full-time...</b>	In 2017/18, 75.7% of enrolments were full-time. In comparison with 2016/17, full-time enrolments have increased by 0.7% (from 47,320 to 47,665) and part-time enrolments have decreased by 3.0% (from 15,745 to 15,265) (Tables 1e and 2c).
<b>Most NI students study in NI, though the proportion studying in GB is increasing...</b>	Of the 62,930 NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2017/18, 72.3% were enrolled at NI HEIs (including 5.9% studying locally at the Open University) and 27.7% at HEIs in GB (a 10-year high) (Table 1a).
<b>Outside of Northern Ireland, the North West of England is the most popular region for NI students...</b>	The most popular regions for NI students who studied in GB were the North West of England and Scotland, with 5,335 and 4,175 NI students enrolled at HEIs in each region respectively (Table 5a).
<b>More NI female students are enrolling...</b>	Females accounted for 57.1% of NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2017/18. A higher proportion of males (77.0%) than females (74.8%) were studying full-time (Tables 3a and 3b).
<b>Fewer NI students are enrolling on full-time undergraduate courses at UK HEIs, but more are enrolling on full-time postgraduate courses...</b>	The number of NI students enrolled on full-time first year undergraduate courses at UK HEIs decreased by 2.8%, from 14,035 in 2016/17 to 13,645 in 2017/18. However, following the recent introduction of postgraduate loans, there was a 19.1% increase in full-time first year postgraduate enrolments over this period, notably a 43.7% increase in enrolments in Higher degree (taught) enrolments, from 1,155 to 1,660 (Tables 2d and 2f).
<b>Over a quarter of NI students are enrolled on Narrow STEM courses...</b>	In 2017/18, 26.8% of NI students at UK HEIs were studying a Narrow STEM related subject and 49.4% a Broad STEM related subject (Table 7a).

## KEY STATISTICS FOR ENROLMENTS AT NORTHERN IRELAND HEIs

<b>Student enrolments at NI HEIs have increased by a net 3.8% over the past decade...</b>	While there has been a 0.2% (110) decrease between 2016/17 (54,570) and 2017/18 (54,460), student enrolments at NI HEIs have increased by a net 3.8% (2,010) over the past decade (from 52,450 in 2008/09) (Tables 8f and 8g).
<b>Most students enrolled at NI HEIs were studying full-time...</b>	In 2017/18, over two thirds (69.8%) of enrolments were full-time. In comparison with 2016/17, full-time enrolments have increased by 0.5% (from 37,825 to 38,005) and part time enrolments have decreased by 1.7% (from 16,745 to 16,455) (Tables 8j and 8k).
<b>Most students in NI HEIs are from NI...</b>	Of the 54,460 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18, 83.5% were from NI, 3.9% from the Republic of Ireland (RoI), 5.9% from Great Britain (GB), 0.8% from other EU countries and 5.9% from non-EU countries (Table 8a).
<b>...however, we have students from a wide range of countries...</b>	In 2017/18, students from over 110 different countries throughout the world were enrolled at NI HEIs. The non-EU countries with the highest number of students at NI HEIs were China (1,255) and Malaysia (355) (Table 8d).
<b>More females are enrolling in NI HEIs...</b>	Females accounted for 57.4% of students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18. A higher proportion of males (72.7%) than females (67.6%) were studying full-time (Tables 10a and 10b).
<b>Fewer students are enrolling on undergraduate courses at NI HEIs, but more are enrolling on postgraduate courses...</b>	Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the number of first year undergraduates enrolling at NI HEIs decreased by 1.2%, from 16,800 to 16,590; however, following the recent introduction of postgraduate loans, first year postgraduate enrolments increased by 12.4% over this period (from 6,170 to 6,930), notably a 44.7% increase in full-time Higher degree (taught) enrolments (from 1,715 to 2,480) (Tables 9c and 9e).
<b>Over a quarter of students at NI HEIs are enrolled on Narrow STEM courses...</b>	In 2017/18, 26.0% of students at NI HEIs were studying a Narrow STEM related subject and 49.6% a Broad STEM related subject (Table 12a).



### Coverage

This statistical bulletin has been produced by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and presents information on students enrolled at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK in the 2017/18 academic year. 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 Northern Ireland (NI) students go to study.

### National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (the 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 statistics.

National Statistics status means that Official Statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All Official Statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. 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. It is DfE's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

### Policy and Operational Context

There continues to be a lot of media interest in the HE sector and HE statistics. With changes in fee regimes throughout the UK, the effect of the economic recession and the potential impact of EU exit, the demand for HE is often in the spotlight. DfE is responsible for formulating policy and administering funding to support education, research and related activities in the Northern Ireland higher education sector. This bulletin forms part of the evidence base used to shape and evaluate DfE strategies and policies.

### Draft Programme for Government (PfG) Framework 2016-2021

The work of the Department is shaped by the draft Programme for Government (2016-2021), which sets the strategic direction of travel for the work of the Executive, expressed in terms of wellbeing-focused outcomes. The document identifies innovation, research and development, and skills and employability as the key drivers of achieving a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy. Higher education has a pivotal role in supporting this aspiration, especially with regard to increasing the skills levels of the



Northern Ireland workforce and increasing the proportion of local graduates from local institutions in professional and management occupations, or indeed further study. The PfG consultation document and its related Outcomes Delivery Plan can be found at the link below:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government-and-budget>

### Maximum Student Number (MaSN)

Before higher education became a devolved matter, the UK Government introduced an annual cap on the number of students each higher education institution across the UK could enrol. Following devolution in 1998, the cap (known as the Maximum Student Number (MaSN)) was maintained in Northern Ireland and is still in use today,

The MaSN applies primarily to full-time home and EU domiciled undergraduates enrolled in Northern Ireland. It does not curtail the recruitment of part-time or postgraduate students (with the exception of PGCE students). Nor does it curtail the recruitment of GB or international (non-EU) students.

Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, both approved to deliver full-time undergraduate provision, receive an annual MaSN allocation from the Department. St. Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, are not subject to MaSN as the Department for Education sets the numbers required for initial teacher training. The OU is also not subject to MaSN given its wholly part-time offering.

### New Policy: Introduction of Part-Time and Postgraduate Student Loans

From the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year. DfE extended its student support package, with tuition fee loans being made available for part-time undergraduate and full-time distance learning study students, and postgraduate students studying certain courses.

Northern Ireland students studying part time undergraduate (or full time distance learning) courses in Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland can now apply for a tuition fee loan of up to £3,022.50 for the academic year. Those starting Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, or Taught or Research Master's courses in Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland can apply for a loan of up to £5,500 per course to help with fee costs. For both types of loans, the fees are paid direct to the university to cover tuition fees.

### Data Collection

The information presented in this statistical bulletin is based on data supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). HESA is the official agency for the collection of information on publicly funded HEIs 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. In this context, HEIs include all publicly-funded universities. The HESA statistics presented in this bulletin relate to students at HEIs 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 (RoI).

## Rounding Strategy

To prevent the identification of individuals, figures throughout the report are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, and 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 unrounded figures. Percentages have also been rounded to one decimal place. More information on the rounding strategy can be found in the [notes and definitions](#) section.

## Data Quality

All information presented in this bulletin has been validated and quality assured by HEIs prior to publication. HEIs are given a set period of time to submit the information to HESA. Following submission, both HESA and DfE perform a series of validation checks to ensure that information is consistent both within and across returns. Trend analyses are used to monitor annual variations and emerging trends. Queries arising from validation checks are presented to HEIs for clarification and, if required, returns may be amended and/or re-submitted. Finally, prior to publication, the data are presented to HEIs for a final sign-off. More detail is available via the link: [Quality of Higher Education Statistics](#).

## 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: DfE policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for the Economy to discharge his or her duties; by the NI Assembly and its Committee for the Economy to scrutinise the HE sector; by other government departments such as DoF as a key indicator in the education domain of the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM); by prospective students to inform their choices around HE; 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](#) section.

## Main Uses of HE statistics

The main uses of these statistics are to monitor HE enrolments and the characteristics of students enrolling both from NI and to NI HEIs. This helps in assessing HEI performance, corporate monitoring, informing and monitoring related policy, and responding to parliamentary/assembly questions and ad hoc queries from the public.

DfE is responsible for the policy, strategic development and financing of the statutory HE sector. Analysis of data trends against key strategic priorities remains a crucial component of data development within DfE.

## HE Activity Elsewhere

Summary figures for the four UK administrations were published by HESA in their Statistical First Release on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

This statistical bulletin can be viewed at the following page -

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/17-01-2019/sb252-higher-education-student-statistics>

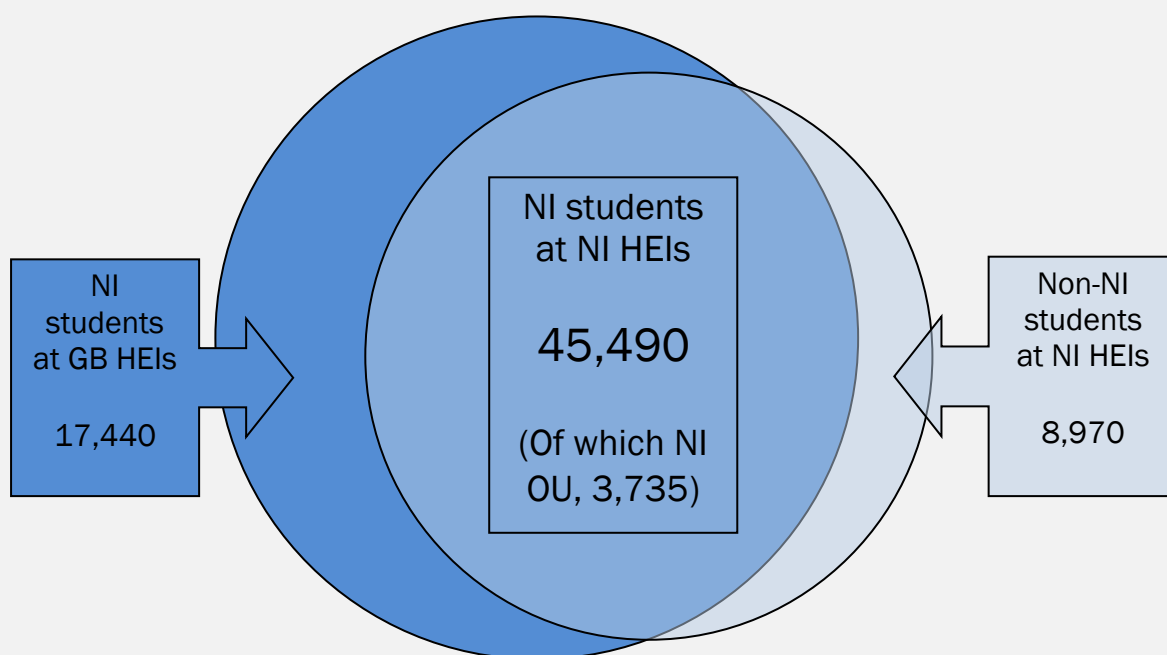
HESA's [Higher Education Student Data 2017/18](#) open data release was published by HESA on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019. This provides more detailed information about students in higher education in the UK.



## STRUCTURE OF REPORT

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 NI Assembly, and coverage of HE issues in the local media, that these two aspects are of key interest to readers.

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 2017/18



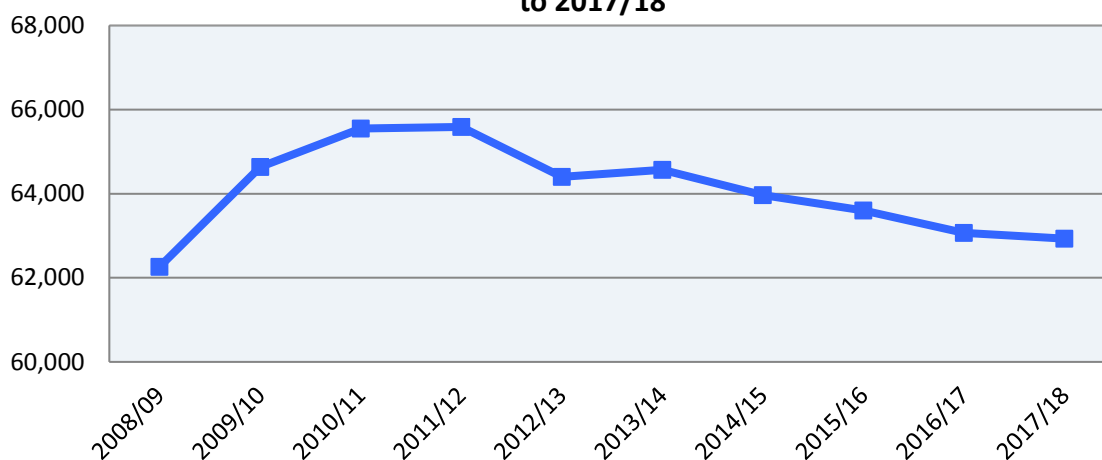
-  Section 1 - NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs - 2017/18 (62,930)
-  Section 2 - Enrolments at NI HEIs - 2017/18 (54,460)

## SECTION 1: Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions (Tables 1 to 7)

### 1.1 Change over the last 10 years – 2008/09 to 2017/18 (Tables 1 and 2, Figure 1)

In 2017/18, 62,930 NI students were enrolled at UK HEIs, which represents a net 1.1% increase from 2008/09. However, over the past decade, enrolments increased initially, from 62,265 in 2008/09 to a peak of 65,590 in 2011/12, before falling gradually to 62,930 in 2017/18 (Tables 1a, 1b and 1d, Figure 1).

**Figure 1 - NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs - 2008/09 to 2017/18**



Over the 10-year period covered by this bulletin (2008/09 to 2017/18), the number of NI domiciled students going to GB to study increased by a net 6.7%, from 16,345 to 17,440; those studying through the Open University (OU) decreased by a net 11.4%, from 4,220 to 3,735 over the same period; while NI enrolments at NI HEIs (excluding the OU) increased by a net 0.1%, from 41,700 in 2008/09 to 41,755 in 2017/18 (Tables 1a and 1b).

The proportion of NI domiciled students studying in GB in 2017/18 (27.7%) was the highest recorded over the past decade. This is likely to have occurred as a result of interaction between a number of factors, including changes to tuition fees, the gradual lifting of the MaSN cap in England, increased application and offer activity during clearing, widening participation and a prolonged ‘demographic dip’ among 18-year-olds in both NI and GB. The net effect has been increased competition between providers for a smaller pool of students, increased scope to make ‘lower tariff’ offers and increased opportunities to attend university. A reduction in part-time enrolments (in both absolute and relative terms) may also have been a contributory factor.

The increase in tuition fees to £9,000 in England and Wales from 2012/13 appears to have had an initial negative impact on the number of NI domiciles studying in GB, possibly through a combination of more young people deciding to study locally due to lower fees and others foregoing a ‘gap year’ in 2011/12 to avoid the increase in fees. However, in part related to the factors mentioned above, the numbers studying in GB are generally on an upwards trajectory, particularly among full-time students.

For instance, when we examine the full-time first year undergraduate cohort, this proportion has increased in net terms from 30.8% to 34.6% over the 10-year period. This increase has not been constant, though, peaking in 2011/12 (35.9%) and again in 2015/16 (36.0%) (Tables 1a and 2a).

In terms of level of study, 'first degree' courses have experienced the largest percentage increase of NI domiciled students, rising by 7.0% over the last 10 years, from 44,930 to 48,060. While 'postgraduate' enrolments have increased by 5.1% over the same period, from 9,310 to 9,780, the number of students enrolled on 'other undergraduate' courses (such as foundation degrees, diplomas, HNDs and HNCs) has fallen by 36.6%, from 8,025 in 2008/09 to 5,090 in 2017/18 (Table 1c).

Full-time enrolments rose by 7.1% over the decade to 2017/18, compared with a 14.0% decrease in part-time enrolments. The drop in part-time enrolments is mainly related to the drop in the number doing part-time 'other undergraduate' courses (Table 1c).

## **1.2 Breakdown of enrolments – 2017/18 (Tables 1 to 4, Figure 2)**

In 2017/18, 62,930 NI students were enrolled at UK HEIs, showing a decrease of 0.2% from 63,070 in 2016/17 (Table 1d).

Mode of study – In 2017/18, full-time enrolments reached their highest point in the last 10 years, both numerically (47,655) and proportionately (75.7%); conversely, part-time enrolments were at their lowest point (15,265; 24.3%). Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, full-time enrolments increased by 0.7%, from 47,320 to 47,665, whereas part-time enrolments decreased by 3.0%, from 15,745 to 15,265. (Tables 1 and 1e).

Level of study – Over three-quarters (76.4%) of NI students were enrolled on a 'first degree' course, 8.1% on 'other undergraduate' courses and 15.5% on a 'postgraduate' course in 2017/18. 'First degree' enrolments decreased by 0.4%, from 48,240 in 2016/17 to 48,060 in 2017/18, while 'other undergraduates' decreased by 7.7%, from 5,515 to 5,090 (Table 1f).

The number of NI domiciled full-time first year undergraduate enrolments at UK HEIs decreased by 2.8%, from 14,035 in 2016/17 to 13,645 in 2017/18 (Tables 2a and 2c).

Contrary to these decreases in undergraduate enrolments, overall NI domiciled 'postgraduate' enrolments at UK HEIs increased by 5.0%, from 9,315 in 2016/17 to 9,780 in 2017/18 (Table 1f). The number of full-time first year postgraduate enrolments increased by 19.1% during this time period (from 2,695 to 3,210). In particular, full-time first year Higher degree (taught) courses attracted a 43.7% increase in the number of enrolments, from 1,155 to 1,660 (Table 2f). This coincided with the introduction of [postgraduate loans](#).

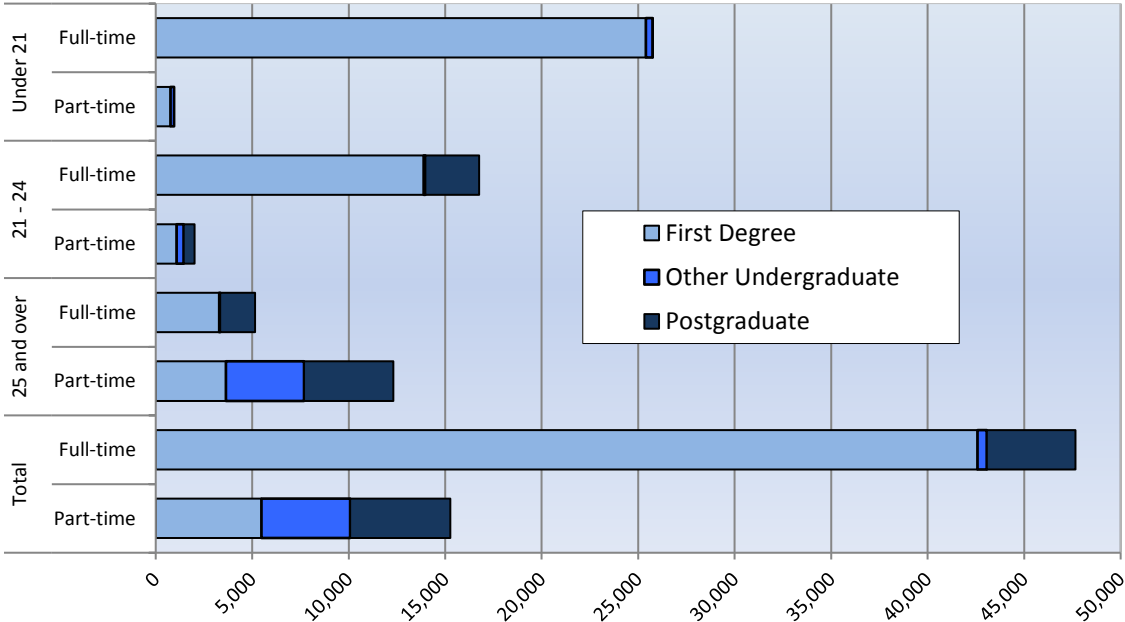
Sex – In recent history, more females than males have been progressing into higher education. This gap between the sexes does not begin at the point of entry to HE, but can be observed early on in the educational system. In NI, females are more likely than males to stay on in full-time education at age 16. They are also more likely than males to be entered for A levels, more likely to pass them, and also more likely to do better (achieve an A grade, including A\*) (Source: [DENI Statistical Press Release: Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post Primary Schools in 2016/17](#)).

Over the past ten years, the female share of the NI domiciled student population enrolled at UK HEIs has declined slightly, from 58.8% in 2008/09 to 57.1% in 2017/18. A higher proportion of males (77.0%) than females (74.8%) were studying full-time in 2017/18 (Tables 3a and 3b).

A higher proportion of males than females were enrolled on ‘first degree’ courses in 2017/18 (78.4% compared with 74.8%), whereas females were more likely than males to be undertaking an ‘other undergraduate’ course (9.1% compared with 6.7%) or a ‘postgraduate’ course (16.0% compared with 14.9%) (Table 3c).

**Age** – In 2017/18, 42.4% of NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs were aged ‘under 21’, 29.8% were aged ‘21 to 24’ and 27.7% were aged ‘25 and over’ (Table 4a).

**Figure 2 : NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by age group, mode and level of study - 2017/18**



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. The majority (96.4%) of NI students aged ‘under 21’ were enrolled on a full-time course, as were 89.3% of those aged ‘21 to 24’. In comparison, the majority (70.5%) of those aged ‘25+’ were enrolled on part-time courses (Table 4c, Figure 2).

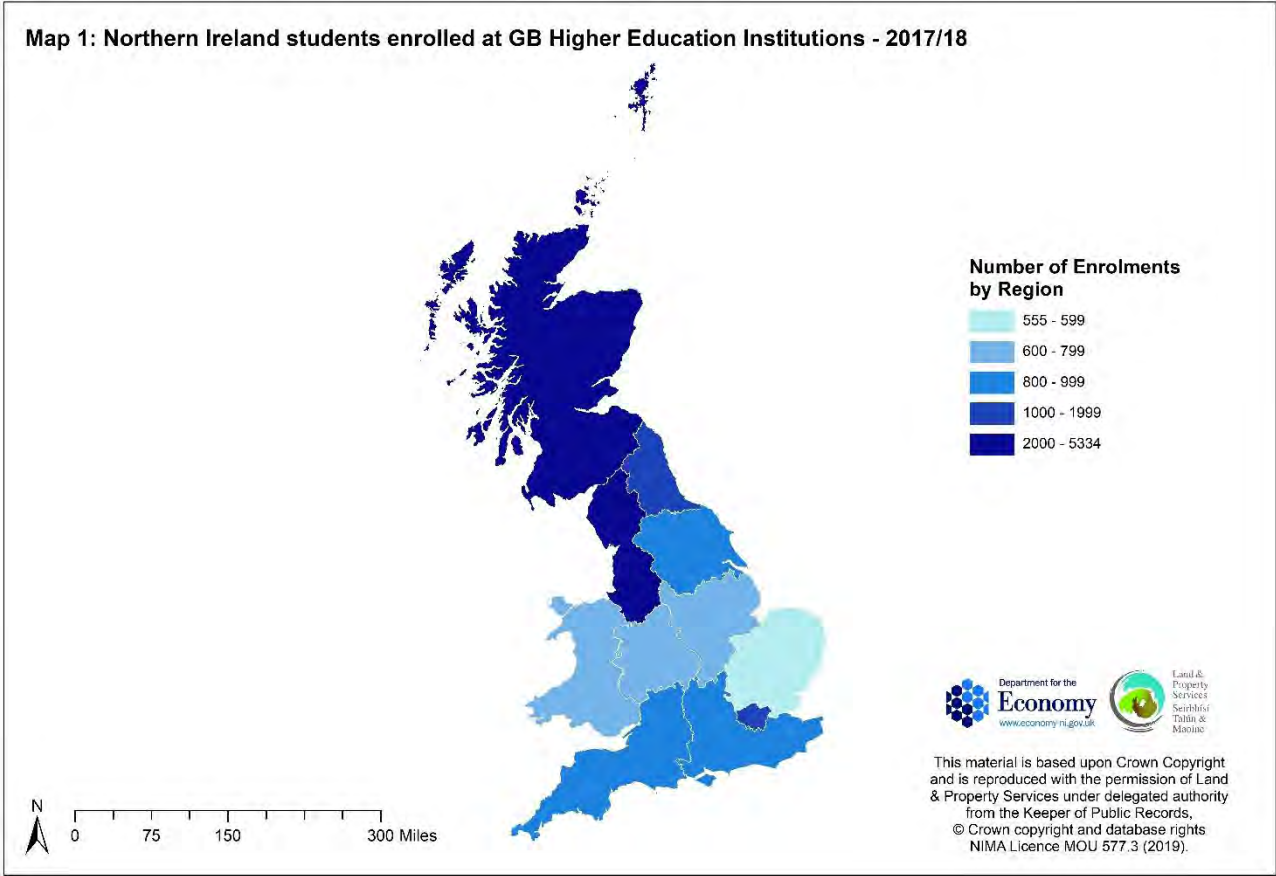
**1.3 Location of Study (Tables 1 to 3 & 5)**

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. However, available research<sup>1</sup> would suggest that the majority of those who plan to leave NI to study do so out of choice. Indeed, figures from the latest

<sup>1</sup><https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/after-school-attitudes-and-perceptions-northern-ireland-school-leavers-towards-higher>



Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey<sup>2</sup> show that around 66.0% of full-time students who left NI to study in GB did not return to NI to work approximately six months after qualifying.



Of the 62,930 NI students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2017/18, 72.3% (45,490) were enrolled at NI HEIs (including 5.9% (3,735) studying locally at the OU) and 27.7% (17,440) at HEIs in GB (Table 1a).

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 HEIs in that region.

The most popular regions for NI students who studied in GB were the North West of England and Scotland, with 5,335 and 4,175 NI students enrolled at HEIs in each region respectively. Other popular regions were the North East of England, with 1,490 NI students, and London, with 1,065 (Table 5a).

In the North West, Liverpool John Moore’s University alone had 1,985 NI student enrolments, making it the most popular HEI in GB for NI students. Liverpool Hope University (730) also had a substantial number of NI domiciled enrolments. In Scotland, the HEIs with the most NI students in 2017/18 were the University of Dundee (715), the University of Glasgow (670) and the University of Edinburgh (530). In the North East, the

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/destination-leavers-uk-higher-education-institutions-northern-ireland-analysis-201617>

University of Northumbria at Newcastle had 645 students from NI. It is worth noting that NI students were enrolled at 163 of the publicly funded HEIs in the UK (Table 5b).

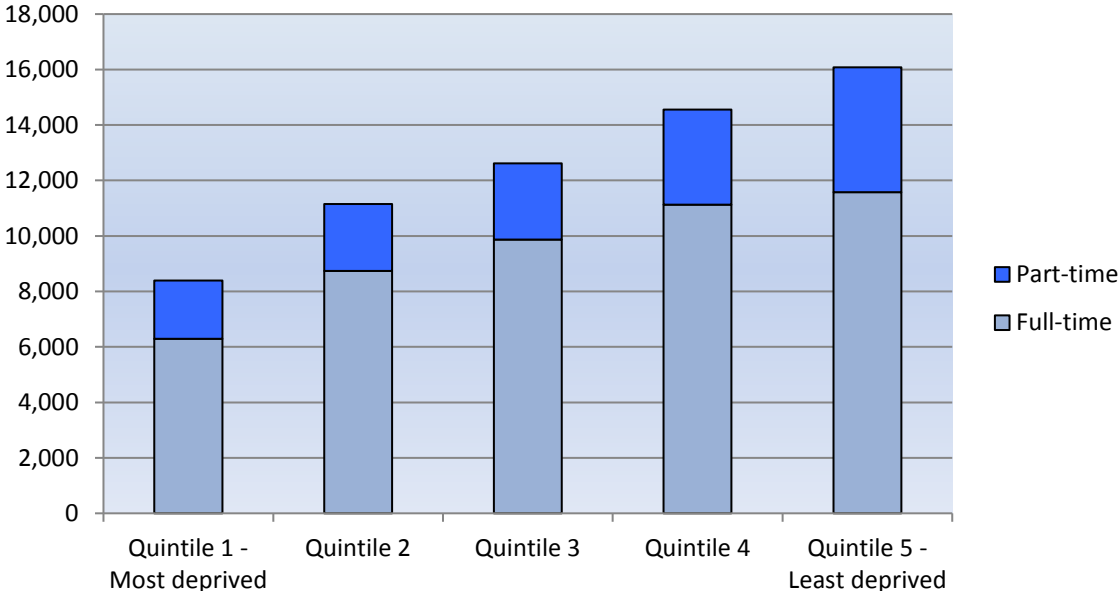
Similar proportions of NI domiciled males (27.3%) and females (28.0%) studied at GB HEIs in 2017/18 (Table 3d).

Of the 13,645 NI domiciled full-time first year undergraduate enrolments at UK HEIs in 2017/18, 65.4% were enrolled at NI HEIs and 34.6% were enrolled at HEIs in GB. This is similar to the proportions in 2016/17 (65.5% and 34.5% respectively) (Table 2a).

**1.4 Multiple Deprivation Measure quintiles (Table 6, Figure 3)**

Of the 62,805 NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs in 2017/18 whose postcodes were known, the highest proportion (25.6%) were from the least deprived multiple deprivation area in NI (quintile 5), almost double the proportion (13.4%) from the most deprived multiple deprivation area (quintile 1) (Table 6a, Figure 3).

**Figure 3: NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and multiple deprivation measure quintile - 2017/18**

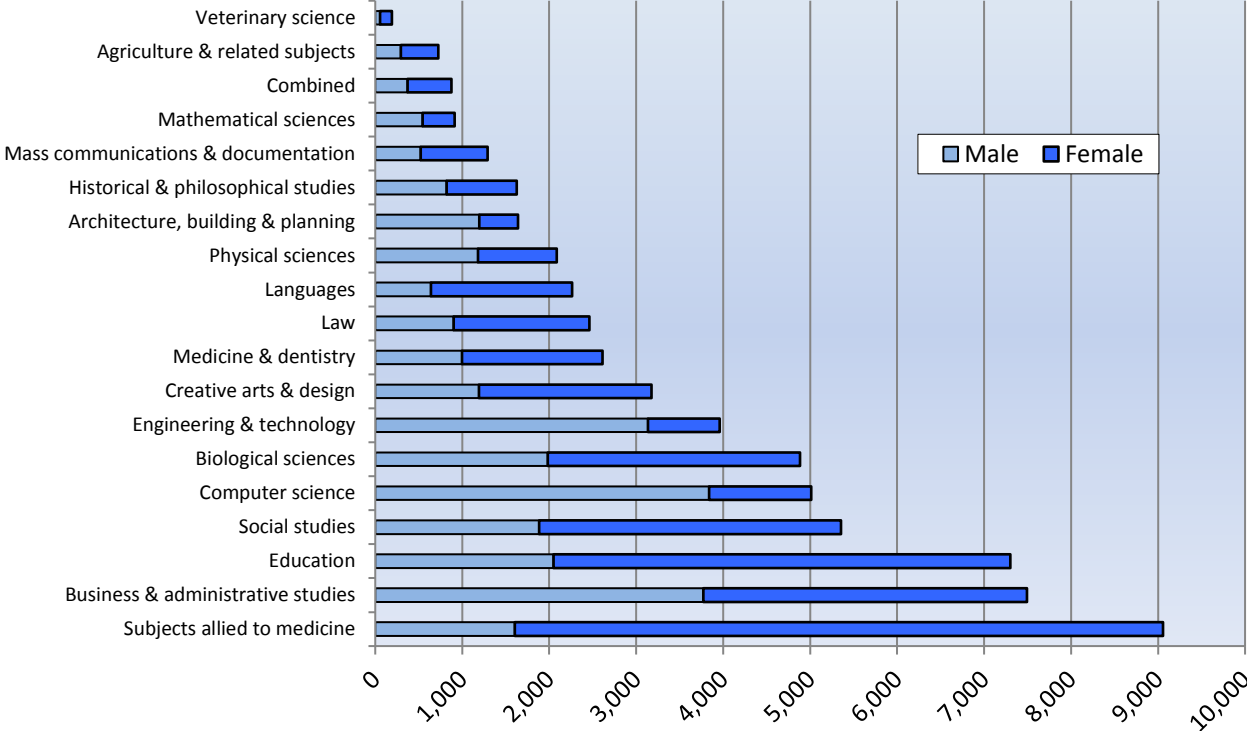


**1.5 Subject of Study (Table 7, Figure 4)**

In 2017/18, the most popular subject areas for NI students studying at UK HEIs were: ‘Subjects allied to medicine’ (which includes subjects such as nursing, pharmacy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), with 9,060 (14.4%) enrolments; ‘Business and administrative studies’ (which includes subjects such as business studies, management studies, accounting, marketing and finance), with 7,490 (11.9%) enrolments; and ‘Education’ (which includes subjects such as training teachers, research study skills in education and academic studies in education), with 7,300 (11.6%) enrolments (Table 7c).

Females accounted for 82.3% of 2017/18 enrolments in ‘Subjects allied to medicine’, 71.9% of those studying ‘Education’ and 71.8% of those studying ‘Languages’. In contrast, males accounted for 79.1% of those studying ‘Engineering and technology’, 76.6% of ‘Computer science’ enrolments and 72.8% of ‘Architecture, building and planning’ enrolments (Table 7c, Figure 4).

**Figure 4 : NI domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by sex and subject area - 2017/18**



In 2017/18, 49.4% of NI students at UK HEIs were studying a Broad STEM<sup>3</sup> related subject. A higher proportion of males (55.0%) than females (45.2%) were studying Broad STEM subjects. Full-time students (53.2%) were more likely to be studying Broad STEM subjects than part-time students (37.6%) (Tables 7a and 7b).

In 2017/18, 26.8% of NI students at UK HEIs were studying a Narrow STEM related subject. A higher proportion of males (39.6%) than females (17.2%) were studying Narrow STEM subjects. Full-time students (29.9%) were more likely than part-time students (17.2%) to be studying Narrow STEM subjects (Tables 7a and 7b).

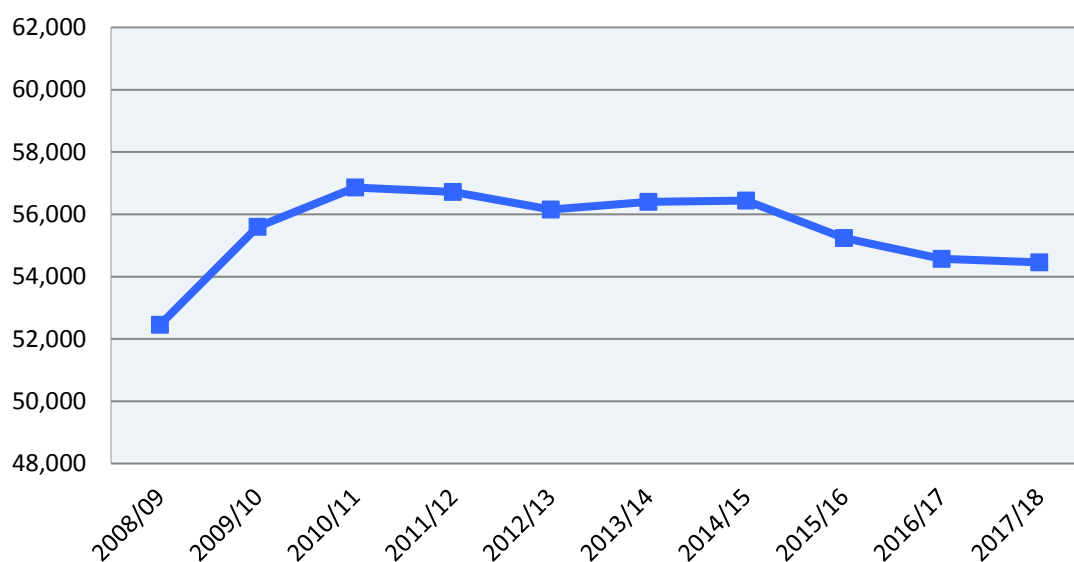
<sup>3</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – see notes to readers for description.

**SECTION 2: Enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions  
(Tables 8 to 14)**

**2.1 Change over the last 10 years – 2008/09 to 2017/18 (Tables 8 & 9, Figure 5)**

While there has been a 0.2% (110) decrease between 2016/17 (54,570) and 2017/18 (54,460), student enrolments at NI HEIs have increased by a net 3.8% (2,010) over the past decade (from 52,450 in 2008/09) (Tables 8, 8f and 8g, Figure 5).

**Figure 5 - Enrolments at NI HEIs - 2008/09 to 2017/18**



Students from NI now account for a smaller proportion of the total population of students at NI HEIs than they did 10 years ago. In 2008/09, students from NI accounted for 87.5% (45,910) of the total population of students at NI HEIs. However, by 2017/18 this proportion has decreased to 83.5% (45,490) (Table 8a).

Over this period, NI HEIs have seen an increase in students from outside NI. The proportion of GB domiciled students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18 (3,205; 5.9%) represents the highest in the last ten years, with a 145.9% increase from 2008/09 (1,305). There has also been a twofold increase in the number of non-EU students over this time period, from 1,550 in 2008/09 to 3,200 in 2017/18 (Tables 8a and 8f). In contrast, the number of students from RoI has fallen by 34.6% (from 3,240 to 2,120), while enrolments from other EU countries were at the same level (445) in both 2008/09 and 2017/18 (Tables 8a and 8f).

Since 2011/12, Ulster University has registered students through a partnership with QA Higher Education, in which courses that have been jointly developed by Ulster University and QA Higher Education, are delivered in Birmingham or London. Although these students are based in Birmingham or London, they are registered as Ulster University students. In previous years this has included significant numbers of students domiciled outside the UK and RoI (peaking at 1,470 in 2012/13). However, the number of such enrolments has been falling in recent years, with 170 of these in 2017/18. (Table 8e).

In terms of level of study, 'first degree' enrolments have experienced an increase of 8.1% (from 34,455 to 37,235) over the ten-year period. Enrolments on 'postgraduate' courses have also shown an increase of 10.1% (from 10,580 to 11,650), while those for 'other undergraduate' courses (such as foundation degrees, diplomas, HNDs and HNCs) have fallen by 24.9% (from 7,415 to 5,570) over the same time period (Table 8h).

The number of full-time enrolments increased by 10.0%, from 34,545 in 2008/09 to 38,005 in 2017/18, whereas there was an 8.1% decrease in part-time enrolments over the same period, from 17,905 to 16,455 (Table 8i).

## **2.2 Breakdown of enrolments – 2017/18 (Tables 8 to 11, Figure 6)**

In 2017/18, 54,460 students were enrolled at NI HEIs, showing a decrease of 0.2% from 54,570 in 2016/17 (Table 8g).

Mode of study – In 2017/18, the proportion of full-time enrolments reached a 10-year high of 69.8%. In comparison with 2016/17, full-time enrolments have increased by 0.5% (from 37,825 to 38,005) and part-time enrolments have decreased by 1.7% (from 16,745 to 16,455) (Tables 8j and 8k).

Level of study – In 2017/18, 68.4% of students at NI HEIs were enrolled on a 'first degree' course, 10.2% on 'other undergraduate' courses and 21.4% on a 'postgraduate' course. Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, 'first degree' enrolments decreased by 1.6% (from 37,840 to 37,235), while 'other undergraduates' decreased by 3.8% (from 5,790 to 5,570) and 'postgraduates' increased by 6.5% (from 10,935 to 11,650) (Tables 8l and 8m).

Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the number of first year undergraduates enrolling at NI HEIs decreased by 1.2%, from 16,800 to 16,590; this reflects a 1.7% decrease in full-time enrolments (from 10,555 to 10,375) and a 0.4% decrease in part-time enrolments (from 6,245 to 6,215) (Table 9b).

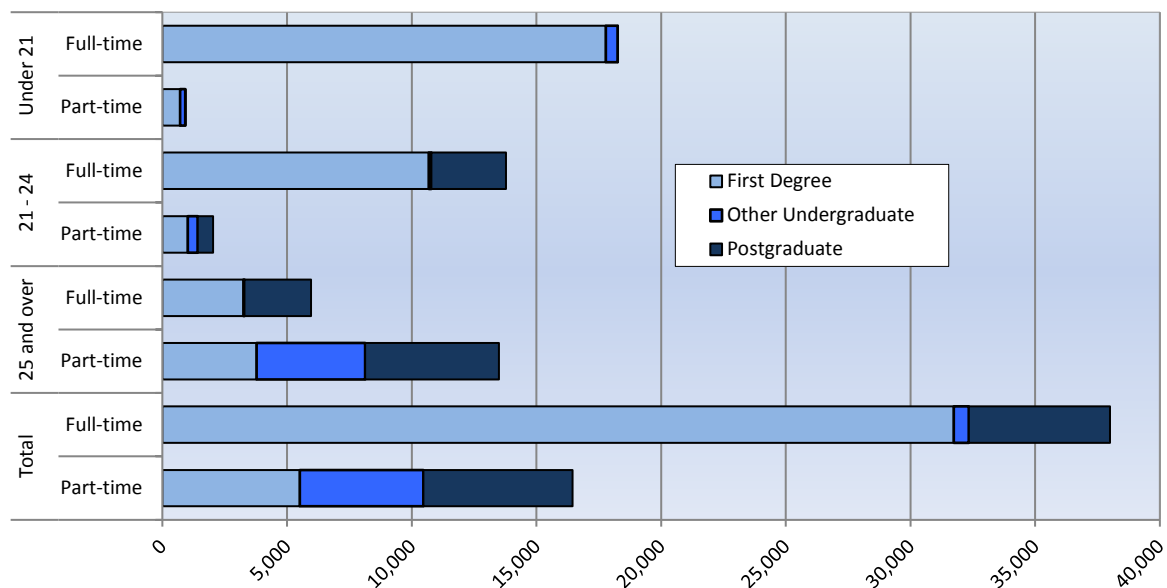
The number of full-time first year postgraduate enrolments at NI HEIs increased by 27.1% during this time period (from 2,945 to 3,740). This was primarily due to a 44.7% increase in the number of full-time first year Higher degree (taught) enrolments (from 1,715 to 2,480), along with a 9.2% increase in Higher degree (research) courses (from 600 to 655). This coincided with the introduction of postgraduate loans (Tables 9e).

Sex – Of the 54,460 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18, 57.4% were female (Table 10a). A higher proportion of males (72.7%) than females (67.6%) were studying full-time. Over the past ten years, the female share of the student population at NI HEIs has decreased from 59.7% to 57.4% (Table 10b).

In 2017/18, males (72.0%) were more likely than females (65.7%) to be undertaking 'first degree' courses, while a higher proportion of females (11.5%) than males (8.5%) were enrolled on 'other undergraduate' courses or on 'postgraduate' courses (22.8% of females and 19.5% of males) (Table 10d).

Age – In 2017/18, 35.2% of students enrolled at NI HEIs were aged 'under 21', 29.0% were aged '21 to 24' and 35.7% were '25 and over' (Table 11a).

Figure 6: Enrolments at NI HEIs by age group, mode and level of study - 2017/18



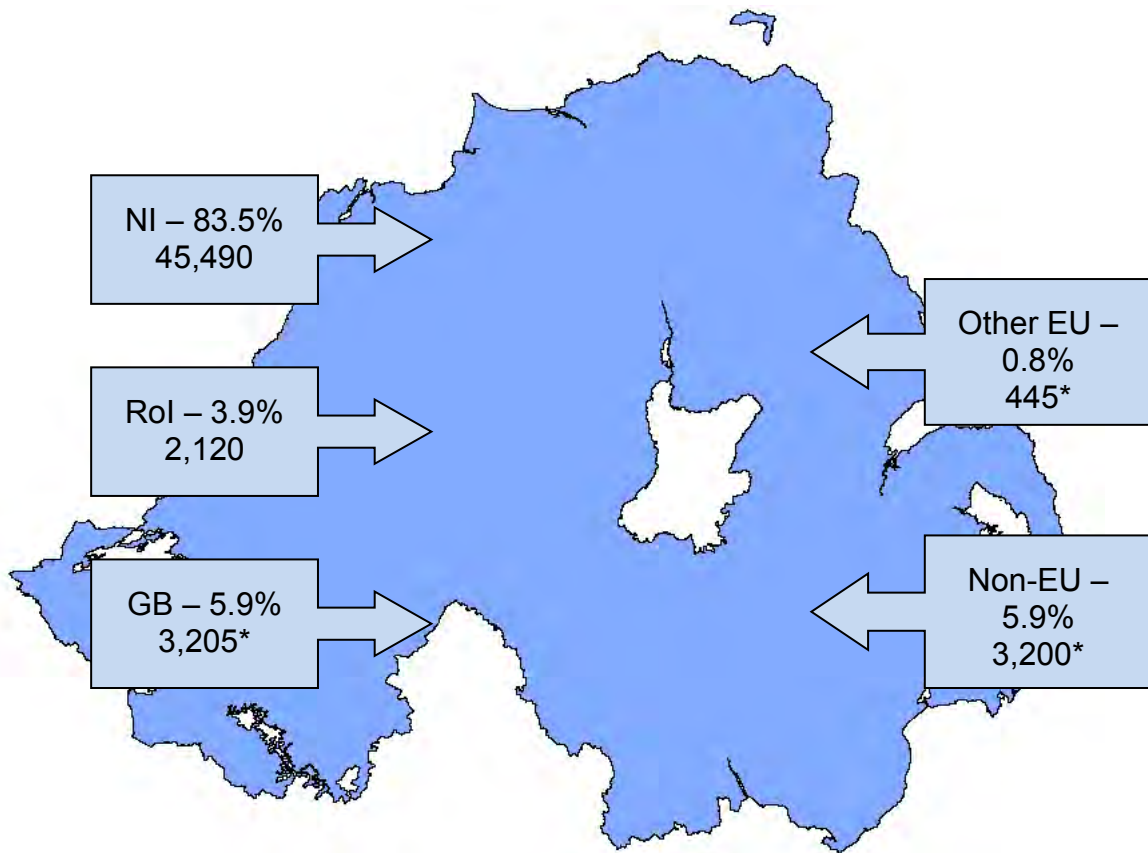
In 2017/18, the majority (95.2%) of students aged 'under 21' at NI HEIs were enrolled on a full-time course, as were 87.1% of those aged '21 to 24'. In contrast, the majority (69.4%) of those aged '25 and over' were enrolled on part-time courses (Table 11d, Figure 6).

### 2.3 Country of Domicile (Tables 8 to 10, Figure 7)

Of the 54,460 students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18, 83.5% were from NI, 5.9% from Great Britain (GB), 5.9% from non-EU countries, 3.9% from the Republic of Ireland (RoI) and 0.8% from other EU countries (Table 8a, Map 2).

The largest percentage increase in the number of enrolments at NI HEIs between 2016/17 and 2017/18 related to those from non-EU countries (13.7%; from 2,815 to 3,200). There was a 1.2% increase in the number of RoI domiciled enrolments in 2017/18 (2,120) compared with 2016/17 (2,095) (Table 8a), mainly related to an increase in 'other undergraduate' enrolments (from 155 to 345). However, RoI domiciled 'postgraduate' enrolments fell, from 1,020 to 905, to reach their lowest total during the 10-year period (Tables 8, 8a, 8f and 8g).

**Map 2: HE Enrolments at campuses in NI by country of domicile – 2017/18**



\*Of the GB, other EU and non-EU enrolments, **445** enrolled on courses that have been jointly developed by the Ulster University and QA Higher Education in Birmingham and London. Although these students were based in Birmingham or London they were registered as Ulster University students.

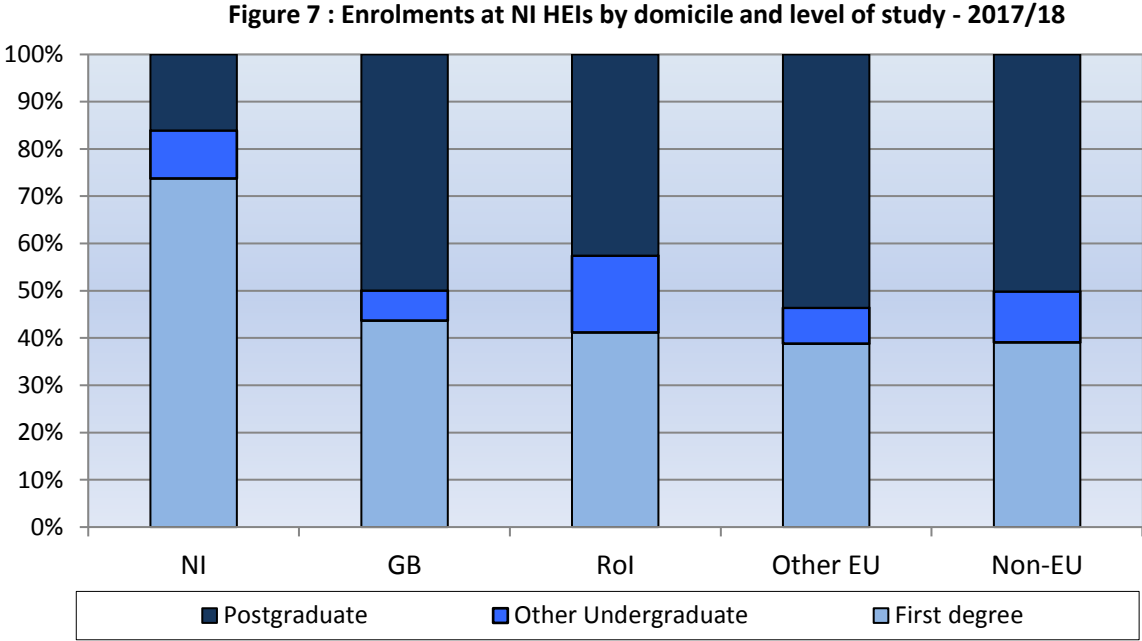
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NIMA. No. MOU 203 © Crown Copyright

In 2017/18, students from over 110 different countries throughout the world were enrolled at NI HEIs. The countries from outside NI, GB and the RoI with the most students enrolled at NI campuses (not including those registered to Ulster University but based in Birmingham or London) were China (1,230), Malaysia (355), United States (235), India (165) and Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China) (110) (Table 8d).

The 170 enrolments, from students domiciled outside the UK and RoI, registered to Ulster University were all based in the London campus. These were made up of students from around 35 different countries, including China (25 students), India (20), Bangladesh (15) and Nepal (15) (Table 8e).



Figure 7 below illustrates the contrast in level of study for NI students and those from other countries. Around half of students at NI HEIs from outside NI are enrolled on ‘postgraduate’ courses, whereas over 70% of students from NI are enrolled on ‘first degree’ courses (Table 8).

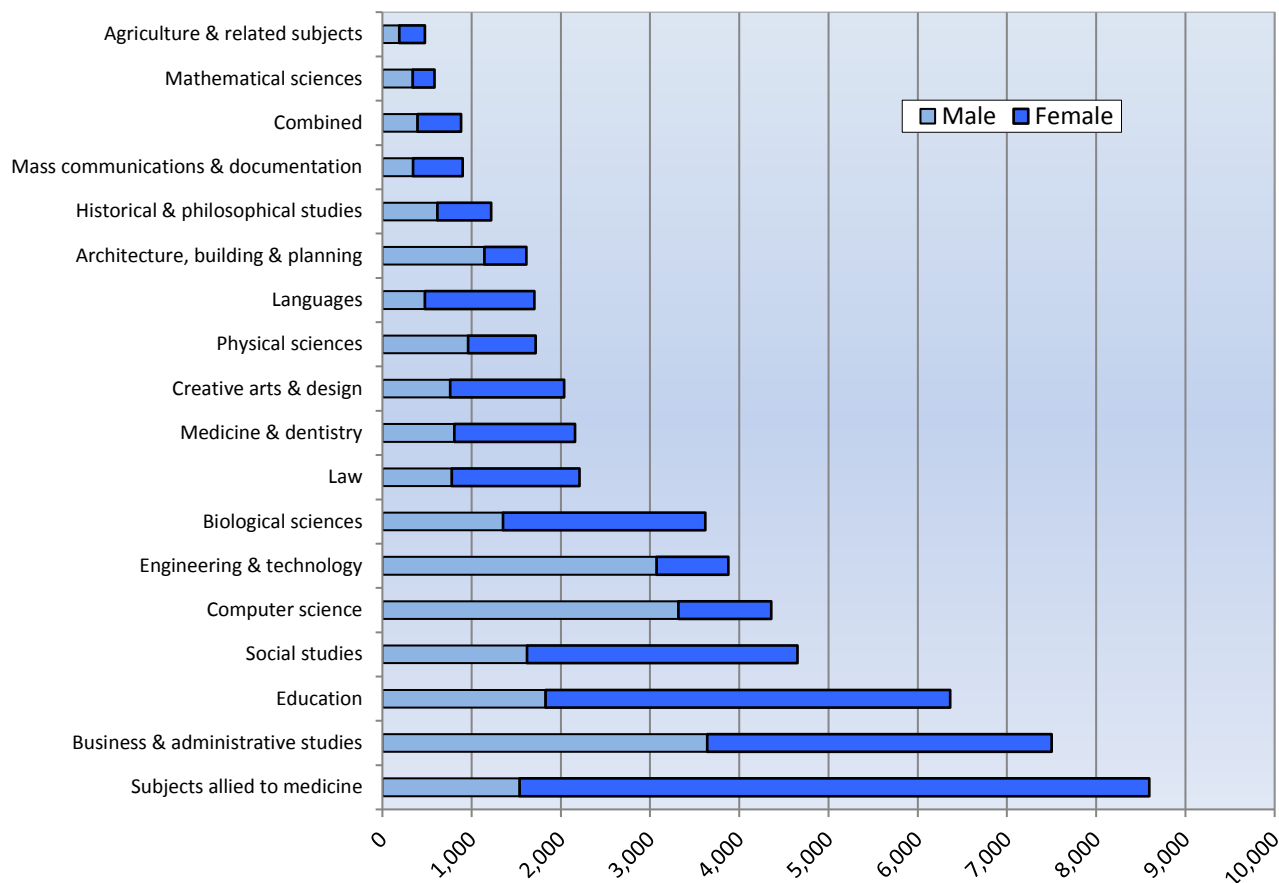


**2.4 Subject of Study (Table 12, Figure 8)**

In 2017/18, the most popular subject areas students were studying at NI HEIs were: ‘Subjects allied to medicine’, with 8,595 (15.8%) enrolments; ‘Business and administrative studies’, with 7,500 (13.8%) enrolments; and ‘Education’, with 6,365 (11.7%) enrolments (Table 12c).

Females accounted for 82.1% of 2017/18 enrolments at NI HEIs in ‘Subjects allied to medicine’, 72.1% of those studying ‘Languages’ and 71.2% of those studying ‘Education’. In contrast, males accounted for 79.3% of those studying ‘Engineering and technology’, 76.1% of ‘Computer science’ enrolments and 70.9% of ‘Architecture, building and planning’ enrolments (Table 12c, Figure 8).

**Figure 8 : Enrolments at NI HEIs by sex and subject area - 2017/18**



In 2017/18, 49.6% of students at NI HEIs were studying a Broad STEM<sup>4</sup> related subject. A higher proportion of males (54.9%) than females (45.6%) were studying Broad STEM subjects. Full-time students (54.2%) were more likely than part-time students (38.9%) to be studying Broad STEM subjects (Tables 12a and 12b).

In 2017/18, 26.0% of students at NI HEIs were studying a Narrow STEM related subject. A higher proportion of males (39.0%) than females (16.3%) were studying Narrow STEM subjects. Full-time students (30.3%) were more likely than part-time students (16.0%) to be studying Narrow STEM subjects (Tables 12a and 12b).

### 2.5 Institutional breakdown (Table 13, Figure 9)

Of all students enrolled at NI HEIs in 2017/18, 45.0% were enrolled at Queen’s University Belfast, 43.5% at Ulster University, 2.8% at Stranmillis University College, 1.8% at St Mary’s University College and 6.9% at the Open University (Table 13b).

#### Queen’s University Belfast

Enrolments at Queen’s University Belfast increased by 2.7% between 2016/17 and 2017/18, from 23,850 to 24,490. Full-time enrolments increased by 3.2% (from 18,135 to 18,720), while part-time enrolments increased by 0.9% (from 5,720 to 5,770) (Table 13d).

<sup>4</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – see notes to readers for full description.

'First degree' enrolments decreased by 0.4% (from 15,160 to 15,100) between 2016/17 and 2017/18, while 'other undergraduates' decreased by 2.8% (from 3,635 to 3,530). 'Postgraduate' enrolments, meanwhile, increased by 15.8% (from 5,055 to 5,855) (Table 13e).

### **Ulster University**

Ulster University enrolments decreased by 3.8% between 2016/17 and 2017/18 (from 24,640 to 23,715). Full-time enrolments decreased by 2.8% (from 17,805 to 17,315), while part-time enrolments decreased by 6.4% (from 6,835 to 6,400) (Table 13a).

The number of full-time students enrolled on courses jointly developed by Ulster University and QA Higher Education, and based in Birmingham and London, decreased by 38.0%, from 715 in 2016/17 to 445 in 2017/18 (Table 13c). There were no part-time enrolments at these campuses.

The number of full-time enrolments at Ulster University campuses based in NI (therefore not including UU Birmingham or London) decreased by 1.3%, from 17,090 in 2016/17 to 16,875 in 2017/18, whereas part-time enrolments based in NI decreased by 6.4%, from 6,835 in 2016/17 to 6,400 in 2017/18 (Table 13d).

Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, 'first degree' enrolments at Ulster University (all campuses) showed a decrease of 3.3% (from 17,900 to 17,315), while 'other undergraduate' enrolments decreased by 16.5% (from 1,260 to 1,055) and 'postgraduate' enrolments decreased by 2.4% (from 5,480 to 5,350) (Table 13e).

### **Open University**

Enrolments at the Open University (where the national centre is located in NI) increased by 3.5% between 2016/17 and 2017/18, from 3,610 to 3,735. All OU enrolments were part-time (Table 13d).

'First degree' enrolments increased by 2.7% (from 2,855 to 2,930) between 2016/17 and 2017/18, while 'other undergraduate' enrolments increased by 4.4% (from 610 to 635) and 'postgraduate' enrolments increased by 16.3% (from 145 to 170) (Table 13e).

### **Stranmillis University College**

Enrolments at Stranmillis University College increased by 2.8% from 1,475 in 2016/17 to 1,520 in 2017/18. Full-time enrolments increased by 8.4% (from 1,010 to 1,095), whereas part-time enrolments decreased by 9.3% (from 465 to 420) (Table 13d).

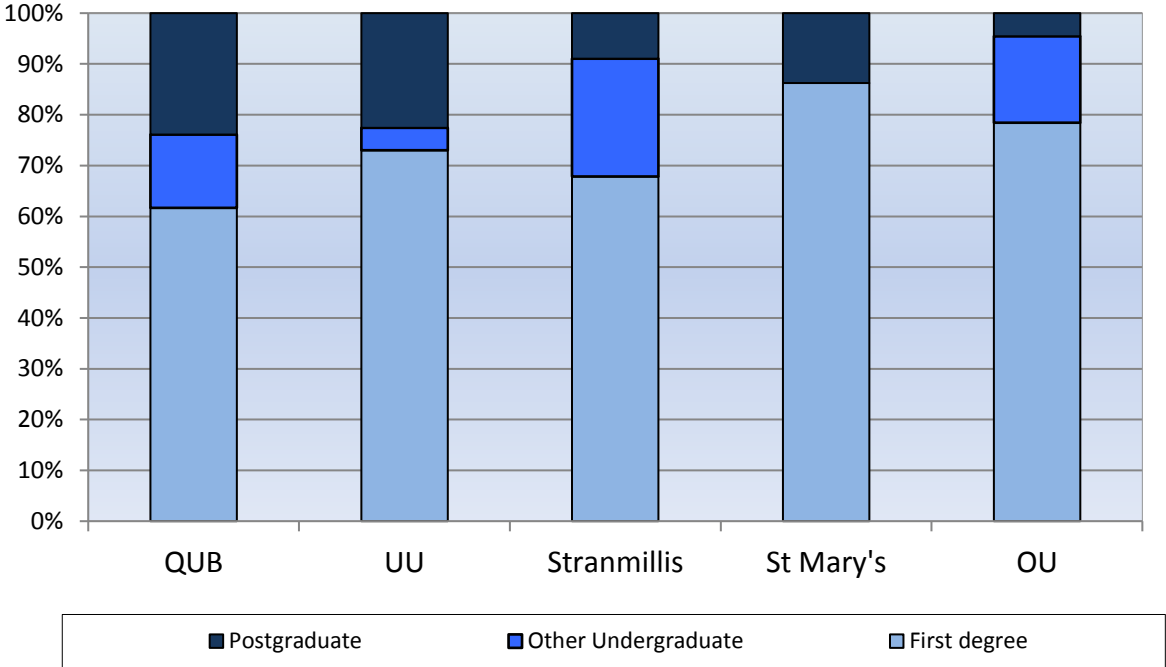
'First degree' enrolments decreased by 2.6% (from 1,060 to 1,030) over this period and 'other undergraduate' enrolments increased by 21.8% (from 290 to 350). 'Postgraduate' enrolments increased by 5 (from 130 to 135) (Table 13e).

### **St Mary's University College**

There was a small increase (1.3%) in the number of students enrolled at St Mary's University College, from 990 in 2016/17 to 1,000 in 2017/18. This was due to an increase in part-time enrolments (from 115 to 130), as full-time enrolments remained the same in both years (875) (Table 13d).

The overall increase can be explained solely by an increase in ‘postgraduate’ enrolments (from 125 to 140) (Table 13e).

**Figure 9 : Enrolments at NI HEIs by Institution and level of study - 2017/18**



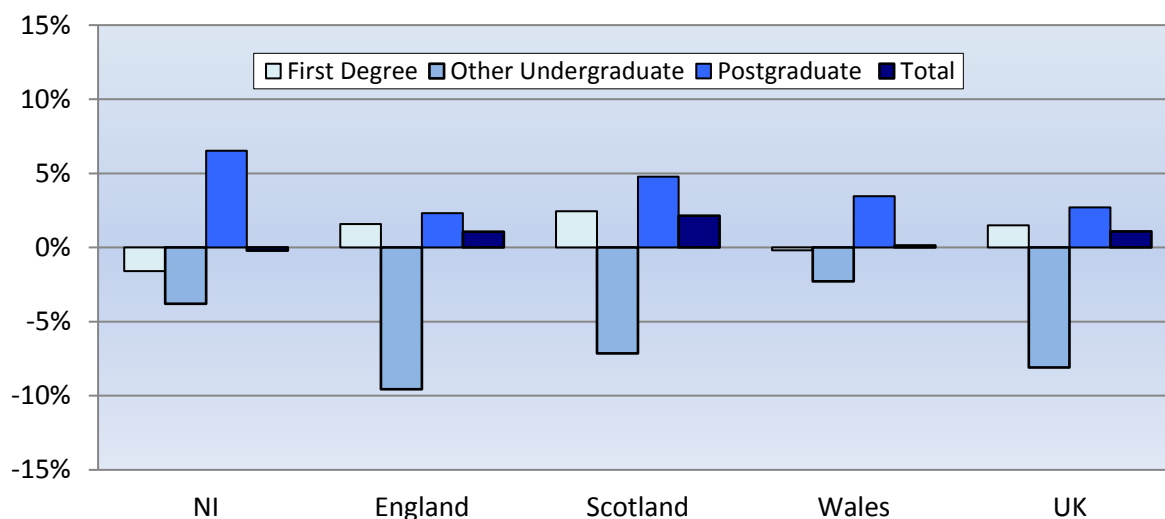
**2.6 UK Comparison (Table 14, Chart 10)**

In 2017/18, 2,343,095 students were enrolled at HEIs throughout the UK. In comparison with 2016/17, student numbers have increased by 1.1% (from 2,317,880) (Table 14a).

Over the same period, enrolments at Scottish HEIs rose by 2.1% (from 241,935 to 247,110), English HEIs showed an increase of 1.1% (from 1,891,980 to 1,911,940), and Welsh HEIs showed an increase of 0.1% (from 129,395 to 129,585). However, enrolments at NI HEIs decreased by 0.2% (from 54,570 to 54,460) (Table 14a).

Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the number of ‘first degree’ enrolments increased at English HEIs (1.6%) and Scottish HEIs (2.4%), but decreased at NI HEIs (1.6%) and Welsh HEIs (0.2%). The number of ‘other undergraduate’ enrolments fell at all locations, with an overall UK decrease of 8.1%, from 168,460 in 2016/17 to 154,815 in 2017/18. ‘Postgraduate’ enrolments rose between 2016/17 and 2017/18 in all locations, with increases ranging from 2.3% in England (from 457,470 to 468,060) to 6.5% in NI (from 10,935 to 11,650) (Table 14b, Figure 10).

**Figure 10 : Percentage change in Enrolments at UK HEIs by level of study and location of institution - 2016/17 to 2017/18**



Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, full-time enrolments at Scottish HEIs increased by 3.4% (from 183,795 to 189,960), while those in English, Welsh and NI HEIs rose by 2.6% (from 1,482,880 to 1,520,950), 2.2% (from 93,550 to 95,630) and 0.5% (from 37,825 to 38,005) respectively (Table 14a).

Over the same period, the number of part-time enrolments decreased in Wales by 5.3%, from 35,845 to 33,955, and also fell in all other locations; decreasing by 4.4% in England (from 409,100 to 390,990), 1.7% in Scotland (from 58,140 to 57,150) and 1.7% in NI (from 16,745 to 16,455) (Table 14a).

**NOTES:**

1. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (the 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 Statistics.

National Statistics status means that Official Statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All Official Statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. 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. It is the Department for the Economy's (DfE's) responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

2. The statistics 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. HESA releases separate publications providing information on HE Student Enrolments and Qualifications obtained at HEIs for the whole of the UK. A notable difference in the HESA publications and those released by DfE is that, from 2014/15, HESA uses revised data returns for the time series figures, whereas DfE does not. Consequently, historical figures for the number of enrolments and qualifications at UK HEIs published by DfE may differ from those in HESA's publications. Further information on this can be found in the ['Notes'](#) section of HESA's Student Statistics bulletin 2017/18.
4. **Change to HESA Methodology** - From 2013/14, HESA has changed the allocation of Open University (OU) students to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Previously, all OU enrolments and qualifications were counted as being within England, where the OU has its administrative centre. HESA has decided from its

2013/14 release onwards that enrolments and qualifications registered at one of the OU's national centres in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will contribute to the totals of those countries where statistics are shown by country of provider. Please note that all non-UK domicile OU students and those who study at postgraduate research level are registered to the OU administrative centre in England.

A full public consultation of NI users of Higher Education Statistics was undertaken by DfE (formerly DEL) in 2015 on this change to the method for allocating OU students, which showed full support. This new allocation method for OU was adopted for all NI HE publications going forward from 2014/15.

5. The bulletin contains HESA statistics only (that is, statistics on enrolments at UK HEIs only). Information on enrolments on HE courses at NI and GB FE colleges, RoI institutions and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) is available via a separate statistical fact sheet, which is published on the [Department's website](#).
6. **Further statistics** on the Northern Ireland HE sector, including qualifications gained, graduate destinations and various higher education fact sheets can be downloaded from the Department's website:  
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-economic-research/higher-education-statistics>
7. **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 HE statistics can be accessed on our statistics guidance page:  
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/quality-higher-education-statistics>
8. **Uses made of HE statistics** - This bulletin is disseminated direct to approximately 100 users. In addition, it is published on the Department's website and can be accessed through a link on the UK National Statistics [GOV.UK](#) publication hub using a filter of 'higher education' as the policy area and 'Department for the Economy' as the department. Users include policy colleagues in DfE, 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 DfE policies, strategies and reviews. Some of the most recent examples are:

- DfE's Higher Education Strategy
- DfE's Widening Participation Strategy

Further details on these strategies are available from the DfE website:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-education-strategies-northern-ireland>

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

- DoF - as a key indicator in the Education Domain of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NI MDM).
- DE - teacher demand model



- Invest NI – to quantify the supply of graduates for potential inward investment to NI

Around 200 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.

## 9. Departmental Targets

Statistics from this bulletin are used in the measurement of the following key commitment as set in the Department’s Northern Ireland ‘Higher Education Strategy - Graduating to Success’:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/graduating-to-success-he-strategy-for-ni.pdf>

“Increase the proportion of Higher Education graduates qualifying in STEM subjects to 22%.”

**10. Rounding Strategy** – DfE conforms to the HESA rounding strategy. Due to the provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Human Rights Act (1998), HESA (and therefore DfE) implements a strategy, in published and released tabulations, designed to prevent the disclosure of personal information about any individual. This strategy involves rounding all numbers to the nearest 5, and suppressing percentages and averages based on small populations.

The HESA rounding strategy changed for the 2013/14 release onwards. Percentages are now suppressed if based on a population of fewer than 22.5 individuals; this is a change from the previous threshold of 52 individuals, used in earlier publications. This change will enable more percentage calculations to be published. A full list of the rounding strategy includes:

- 0, 1 and 2 are rounded to 0;
- all other numbers are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5;
- percentages based on fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed;
- averages based on fewer individuals are also suppressed;
- percentages and averages are based on unrounded figures;
- percentages are rounded to one decimal place;
- full-time equivalent (FTE) data are not rounded; and
- financial data are not rounded

Total figures are also subject to this rounding methodology; so the sum of numbers in each row or column may not match the total shown.

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## **DEFINITIONS:**

### **Higher Education**

12. HE 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) (for example, courses at the level of Certificate of HE and above).

### **Count of Students**

13. 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.

14. HESA data are a count of enrolments across the entire academic year.

### **Academic year**

15. The academic year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July.

### **First year students**

16. 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**

17. Domicile refers to a student's permanent place of residence prior to enrolment on a course.

18. 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**

19. Level of study

- I. *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 (that is, already qualified at Level 6 of the QCA National Qualifications Framework).

- Higher degree (research) includes doctorate and masters degrees studied primarily through research
  - Higher degree (taught) includes doctorate and masters degrees not studied primarily through research, and postgraduate bachelors degrees at level M
  - Other postgraduate includes postgraduate diplomas, certificates and professional qualifications, Postgraduate
  - Certificate in Education (PGCE at level M), institutional postgraduate credits and no formal postgraduate qualifications.
- II. *First degrees* include: 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.
- III. *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.
- IV. *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**

20. Mode of attendance distinguishes students studying full-time or part-time:

- I. *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.
- II. *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

21. Age is as at 31<sup>st</sup> August within the relevant academic year.

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

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

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

## Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM)

23. The analysis presented in section 1.4 utilises five groups (quintiles) of Super Output Areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. These five groups are determined based on level of deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

SOAs ranked 1 to 178 are the most deprived quintile relative to all other SOAs. Those ranked 713 to 890 are the most affluent relative to all other SOAs. SOA is determined using the postcode provided on the enrolment record.

NIMDM (2017) is a weighted combination of the seven domains of deprivation. The Income and Employment Deprivation domains combined account for nearly 50% of the multiple deprivation measure. The Health and Disability Domain, and Education Domain combined account for a further 30%, and the remainder is made up of the Access to Services, Living Environment and Crime and Disorder Domains.

For further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland, please follow this link: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017#toc-2>

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### [Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK Higher Education Institutions](#)

[Table 1](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by level of study, mode of study and location of institution – 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 1a](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and location of institution – 2008/09 to 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 1b](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs in each location by mode of study between 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 1c](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and level of study between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 1d](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and location of institution between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 1e](#) – Percentage change in Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 1f](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and level of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 2](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled first year students enrolled at UK HEIs by level of study, mode of study and location of institution – 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 2a](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled first year undergraduate students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and location of institution - 2008/09 to 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 2b](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled first year undergraduate students enrolled at UK HEIs in each location by mode of study between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 2c](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled first year undergraduate students enrolled at UK HEIs in each location by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 2d](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled first year students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and detailed level of study - 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 2e](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled first year students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and detailed level of study between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 2f](#) – Percentage change of Northern Ireland domiciled first year students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and detailed level of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 3](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study, level of study, location of institution and sex - 2017/18

[Table 3a](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and sex - 2008/09 and 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 3b](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by sex and mode of study – 2008/08 and 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 3c](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by sex and level of study – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 3d](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study, sex and location of institution – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 4](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by level of study, mode of study, sex and age – 2017/18

[Table 4a](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by level of study and age group – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 4b](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by age group, level and mode of study – 2017/18

[Table 4c](#) – Proportion of Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by age group, level and mode of study – 2017/18

[Table 5](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by year of study and sex – 2017/18 (a) by region of institution (b) by institution (top 20 only)

[Table 6](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study, MDM quintile, level of study and sex – 2017/18

[Table 6a](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and MDM quintile – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 7](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study, sex and subject area – 2017/18

[Table 7a](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by sex and STEM – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 7b](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by mode of study and STEM – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 7c](#) – Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at UK HEIs by subject area and sex – 2017/18 (with %)

## [Enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions](#)

[Table 8](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs including OU by level of study, mode of study and domicile – 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 8a](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by domicile – 2008/09 to 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 8b](#) – Enrolments at NI HEIs by domicile, level of study, mode of study and institution – 2017/18

[Table 8c](#) – Enrolments at Ulster University by domicile, level of study, mode of study and campus – 2017/18

[Table 8d](#) – Enrolments from outside the UK and RoI at Northern Ireland HEIs (not including UU Birmingham or London) by country of domicile (top 20) and institution – 2017/18

[Table 8e](#) – Enrolments from outside the UK and RoI at UU Birmingham and London by country of domicile (top 20) and institution – 2017/18

[Table 8f](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by domicile between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 8g](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by domicile between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 8h](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 8i](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 8j](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study – 2008/08 to 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 8k](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 8l](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study – 2008/09 to 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 8m](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 9](#) – [First year](#) enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs including OU by level of study, mode of study and domicile – 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 9a](#) – [First year undergraduate](#) enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study – 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 9b](#) – Percentage change of first year undergraduate enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 9c](#) – First year enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs including OU by mode of study and detailed level of study - 2008/09 to 2017/18

[Table 9d](#) – Percentage change of first year enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study and detailed level of study between 2008/09 and 2017/18

[Table 9e](#) – Percentage change of first year enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study and detailed level of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 10](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study, mode of study, sex, year of student and country of domicile – 2017/18

[Table 10a](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study and sex – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 10b](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by sex and mode of study – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 10c](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by sex and level of study – 2017/18

[Table 10d](#) – Proportion of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by sex and level of study – 2017/18

[Table 11](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study, age group, year of student, mode of study and sex – 2017/18

[Table 11a](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study and age group – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 11b](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by age group by level of study – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 11c](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by age group, mode of study and level of study – 2017/18

[Table 11d](#) – Proportion of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs in each mode and level of study by age group – 2017/18

[Table 12](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by subject area, year of student, mode of study and sex – 2017/18

[Table 12a](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by sex and STEM – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 12b](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by mode of study and STEM – 2017/18 (with %)



[Table 12c](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by subject area and sex – 2017/18 (with %)

[Table 13](#) – Enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs by level of study, mode of study and institution – 2013/14 to 2017/18

[Table 13a](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs in each level of study and institution between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 13b](#) – Proportion of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs in each institution by mode of study – 2017/18

[Table 13c](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at UU Birmingham and London by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 13d](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs (not including UU Birmingham or London) by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 13e](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at Northern Ireland HEIs in each institution by level of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 14](#) – (UK COMPARISON) All enrolments at UK HEIs including OU by level of study, mode of study and location of institution – 2013/14 to 2017/18

[Table 14a](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at UK HEIs in each institution by mode of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18

[Table 14b](#) – Percentage change of enrolments at UK HEIs in each institution by level of study between 2016/17 and 2017/18