NISRA
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

SKILLS TO SUCCEED | APPRENTICESHIPS

Statistical Bulletin

Higher Level Apprenticeships (Level4/5) in Northern Ireland:

Academic years: 2017/18 - 2019/20

Published by: Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch

Department for the Economy, 39-49 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8FD

Contact: Seana McIlwaine

Telephone: 028 90257708

E-mail: seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk

Theme: Children, Education & Skills

Coverage: Northern Ireland

Frequency: Annual

Published date: 16 March 2021

This publication is also available at:

Higher Level Apprenticeship activity

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to:

Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch
Department for the Economy
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8FD
Tel: +44 (0)28 90257526 or (0)28 90257708
Email: seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....4

LIST OF TABLES.. 4

ABBREVIATIONS.....5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 6

INTRODUCTION 7

1. ENROLMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS ON HLA PROGRAMMES 9

PROPORTION OF HLA ENROLMENTS IN FE COLLEGES 9
NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS AND INDIVIDUALS 9

2. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP STARTS (Year 1 of HLA) 10

STARTS 10
WHERE IS HLA PROVISION BEING DELIVERED? 10
STARTS BY GENDER.....131
STARTS BY AGE.....12
STARTS BY HLA LEVEL.....112
START DATES.....13
STARTS BY SUBJECT AREA.....11
STARTS BY DEPRIVATION QUINTILE.....14

3. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP, ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20.....16

PARTICIPANT PROFILE.....16
OCCUPANCY.....17
SECTOR SUBJECT AREA.....17
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM).....18
HLAs BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT (LGD) 19

4. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PERFORMANCE.....20

PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....20
SUCCESS BY GENDER.....21
SUCCESS BY AGE.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
SUCCESS BY STEM INDICATOR .....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

ANNEX A: NOTES TO READERS 23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Number of HLA Starts, 2017/18-2019/20……10
Figure 2.2: Number of HLA starts by provider, 2017/18 – 2019/20……11
Figure 2.3: HLA starts by gender, 2017/18 - 2019/20……11
Figure 2.4 Starts by age, 2017/18-2019/20……12
Figure 2.5: HLA starts by level of programme, 2017/18 - 2019/20……12
Figure 2.6a: Number of HLA starts by starting month, 2019/20……13
Figure 2.6b: Cumulative total of HLA starts by starting month, 2019/20……13
Figure 2.7: HLA starts by the six most popular sector subject areas, 2017/18 - 2019/20……14
Figure 2.8a: Proportion of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2019/20……15
Figure 2.8b: Number of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2017/18 - 2019/20……15
Figure 3.1: HLA particpants by year of programme, 2019/20……16
Figure 3.2: HLA participants by gender, 2019/20……16
Figure 3.3: HLA participants by age group, 2019/20……16
Figure 3.4: HLA participants by level of programme, 2019/20……17
Figure 3.5: Occupancy of all HLA participants, 2017/18 to 2019/20……17
Figure 3.6: HLA participants by Sector subject area and gender, 2019/20……18
Figure 3.7: HLA participants by STEM, 2019/20……19
Figure 3.8: HLA participants per 100,000 population by LGD, 2019/20……20
Figure 4.1: Performance of HLA participants, academic years 2018/19 & 2019/20…..21
Figure 4.2: HLA participant success rate by gender, academic year 2019/20……22
Figure 4.3: HLA participant success rate by Age group, academic year 2019/20……..22
Figure 4.4: HLA participant success rate by STEM indicator, academic year 2019/20.23

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Enrolments and Participants on HLA programmes by academic year……..9
Table 3.1: HLA participants by LGD and Rate per 100,000 population aged 16-64 years, 2019/20……19
Table 4.1: Performance of final year HLA participants, academic year 2019/20…….. 21

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Text
BMC	Belfast Metropolitan College
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
CDR	Consolidated Data Return
DfE	Department for the Economy
FE	Further Education
FLU	Funded Learning Unit
HLA	Higher Level Apprenticeship
NI	Northern Ireland
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure
NRC	Northern Regional College
NWRC	North West Regional College
PLAQ	Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications
RRQ	Register of Regulated Qualifications
SERC	South Eastern Regional College
SRC	Southern Regional College
SSA	Sector Subject Area
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWC	South West College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This official statistics release presents a range of analysis on the Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) level 4/5 programme in Northern Ireland. This covers provision across the academic years 2017/18 to 2019/20 and reports on HLAs delivered in Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). The statistics presented in this bulletin cover the characteristics of the participants enrolled on HLA courses and analysis of performance in terms of achievements.

KEY POINTS:

- In academic year 2019/20, there were 553 starts on an HLA programme. This was an increase of 101 (22.3%) compared to 452 HLA starts recorded in 2018/19.
- A trend is emerging showing more males are entering HLA programmes than females. Approximately one in three starts in 2019/20 were female; 188 females compared to 365 males.
- In total there were 981 participants on HLA programmes in 2019/20; this included 553 starts, 361 in year 2 and 67 in year 3.
- In 2019/20, ‘Engineering and manufacturing technologies’ was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (36.8%) of all HLA participants.
- The In 2019/20, ‘Engineering and manufacturing technologies’ was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (36.8%) of all HLA participants.
- The overall success rate for final year individuals in 2019/20 was 84.7%, this equated to 255 HLA participants successfully achieving their qualification.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision commenced in Northern Ireland in 2017/18 academic year. Level 4 and 5 HLA programmes were delivered across Further Education (FE) Colleges in Northern Ireland and in 2018/19 the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) commenced delivery of HLAs. The latest Statistical Bulletin provides key information on level 4 and 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship programmes and the participants for the academic years 2017/18 to 2019/20. A level 4 or 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship is equivalent to a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or a foundation degree.

The statistics presented in this bulletin cover a range of topics including starts, occupancy and achievement for participants on NI HLAs. This publication only reports on the provision of HLAs at level 4 and level 5 (Foundation degree or equivalent).

Higher Level Apprenticeships at level 6 and level 7 are offered at the Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland, this data is provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and is reported in a separate Fact Sheet. The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme but will be a minimum of two years. The current frameworks can be accessed at Types of Apprenticeships.

BACKGROUND

The scope of the HLA programme can be found in the policy publication 'Securing our Success - The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships' (published June 2014). Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) offer a spectrum of support from entry level up to level 8 (equivalent to a Doctorate), they facilitate lifelong learning and allow participants to move in and out of professional education and training at their own pace.

Several funding streams are available to FE colleges to deliver provision. These include direct funding from the Department for the Economy (DfE), through a mainstream mechanism or government training programmes, such as Training for Success. FE colleges can also receive funding from businesses/individuals, termed as cost recovery, or from other government departments, such as Department of Education (DE), through the Entitlement Framework programme. Most FE college provision includes courses that can potentially lead to a regulated qualification on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ); a smaller proportion are non-regulated; all HLA provision reported on in this publication are regulated courses.

A participant on an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification. Where a participant has more than one enrolment their core qualification will be used for reporting purposes.

A list of key statistical publications can be found at the DfE publication schedule, including those listed below:

Further Education Statistics

ApprenticeshipsNI Statistics

Higher Education Statistics

In relation to data from FE colleges, Notes to Readers provides further information on programme design and terminology used within the report. An associated Background Quality Report is also available.

This publication has been produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics, complying with the pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value and is published on an annual basis.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

Detailed additional and supplementary tables are available on the DfE web page: Higher Level Apprenticeship in Northern Ireland - academic years 2017/18 to 2019/20.

1. ENROLMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS ON LEVEL 4/5 HLA PROGRAMMES

This section focuses on level 4 and 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision delivered in Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges in the academic years 2017/18 - 2019/20. CAFRE HLA data are not included in section 1. All HLA programmes reported on in this publication are regulated courses.

PROPORTION OF HLA ENROLMENTS IN FE COLLEGES

In 2019/20, 17.4% (23,075) of all FE enrolments (132,354) were allocated to the 'Government Training' funding group, of which 971 (0.7% of all FE enrolments) were HLA enrolments (Table A1 and A2).

NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS AND INDIVIDUALS

An individual student engaged in an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification with potentially additional qualifications as part of their programme of study. Therefore, enrolment data will always be greater than or equal to the number of individuals participating in the programme.

The number of enrolments per individual is very close to one; reporting at 1.01 in all academic years (Table 1.1, Table A2).

Table 1.1: Enrolments and Participants on HLA programmes by academic year

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Enrolments	327	694	971
Participants	324	689	959
Enrolments per participant	1.01	1.01	1.01

Source: QLS, Consolidated Data return (CDR)

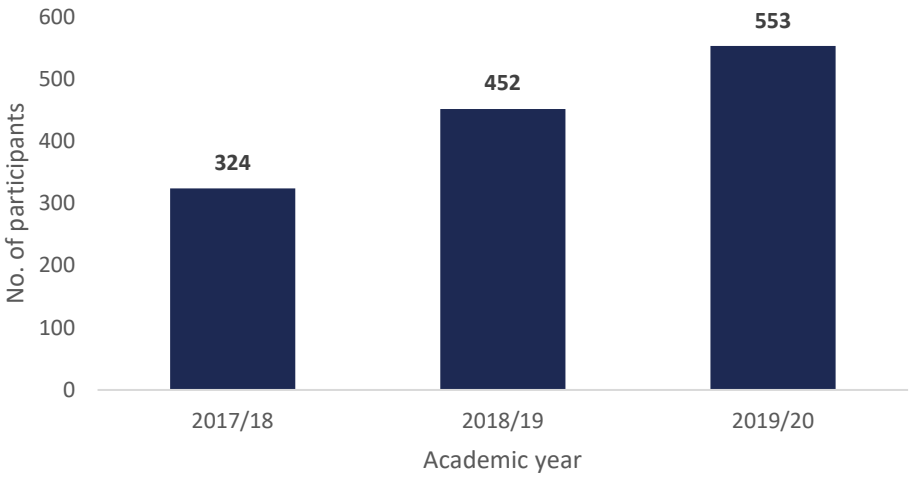
2. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP STARTS LEVEL 4/5 - YEAR 1 OF HLA

A participant on an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification. Where a participant has more than one enrolment their core qualification will be used for reporting purposes. This section provides a summary of HLA starts and comparisons over academic years.

STARTS

FE colleges commenced delivering HLAs in 2017/18 and CAFRE in 2018/19.
In academic year 2019/20, there were 553 starts on an HLA programme. This was an increase of 101 (22.3%) compared to 452 HLA starts recorded in 2018/19. There has been a notable increase since the programme began in 2017/18 (Figure 2.1, Table B1).

Figure 2.1: Number of HLA Starts, 2017/18 – 2019/20



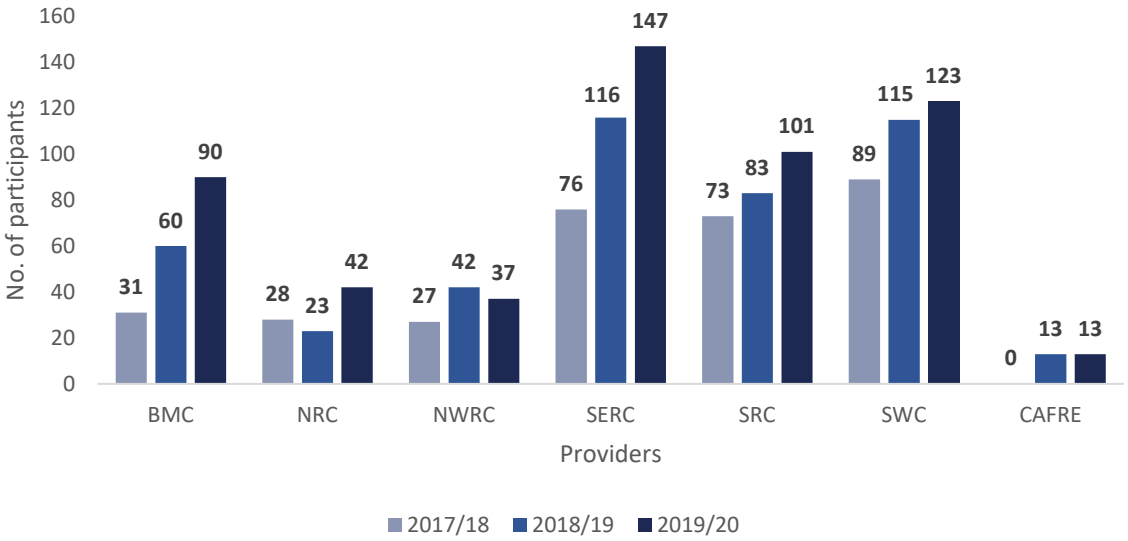
Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration system

This annual increase may be due to a greater number of student places and a wider range of HLAs being made available (See Annex A for Core Qualification List).

WHERE IS HLA PROVISION BEING DELIVERED?

In 2019/20, five of the seven providers reported an increase in the number of participants starting HLAs compared to 2018/19. South Eastern Regional College (SERC) had the largest proportion of HLA starts accounting for 26.6% (147), followed by South West College (SWC) 22.2% (123). The number of HLA starts in CAFRE remained the same (13) from 2018/19 to 2019/20 (Figure 2.2, Table B1).

Figure 2.2: Number of HLA starts by provider, 2017/18 – 2019/20

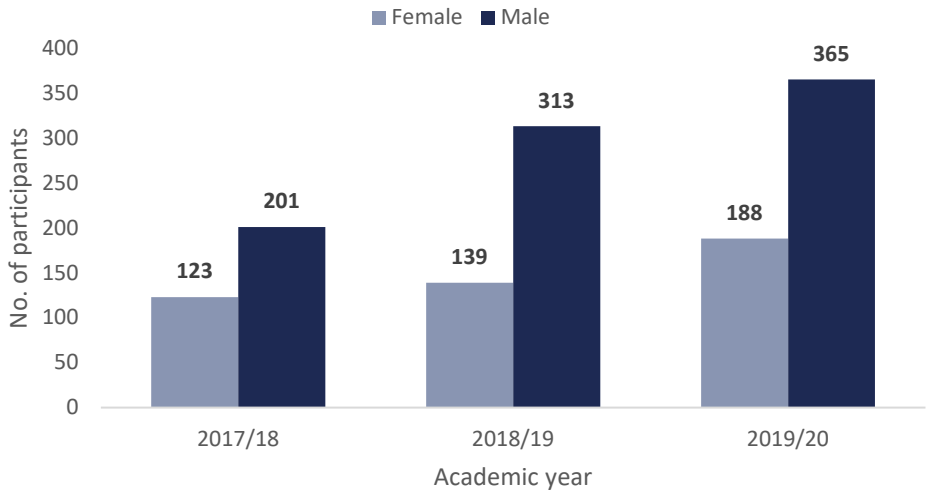


Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

STARTS BY GENDER

A trend is emerging showing more males are entering HLA programmes than females. Approximately one in three starts in 2019/20 were female; 188 females compared to 365 males. The number of male HLA starts is greater than females in all academic years. However, it should be noted the percentage increase in the number of female HLA starts from 2018/19 to 2019/20 was 35.3%, from 139 to 188 while for males it was 16.6%, from 313 to 365 (Figure 2.3, Table B2).

Figure 2.3: HLA starts by gender, 2017/18 – 2019/20



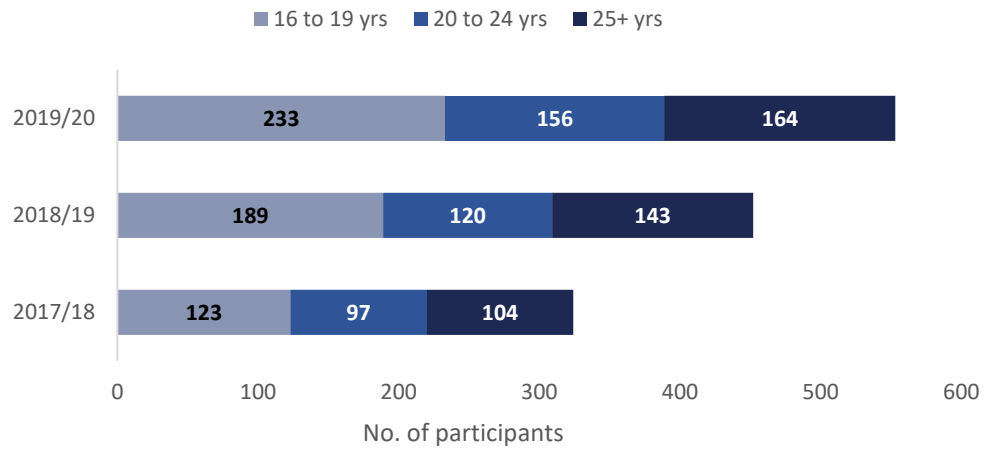
Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

STARTS BY AGE

In 2019/20 the highest proportion (42.1%) of HLA starting participants were in the youngest age group, 16-19 year olds; 233 participants. The next highest proportion

(29.7%) were those aged 25 and over; 164 participants. The age profile of HLA starts has been similar in proportion across the reported academic years (Figures 2.4, Table B3).

Figure 2.4: HLA Starts by age, 2017/18 – 2019/20

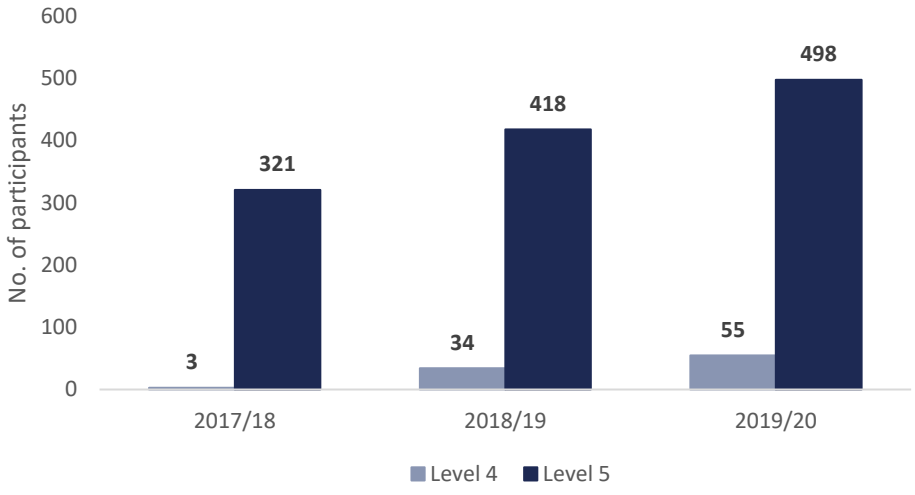


Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

STARTS BY HLA LEVEL

Figure 2.5 shows the majority of starts commenced level 5 programmes in all academic years. In 2019/20, 90.1% (498) of starts began a level 5 HLA compared to 9.9% (55) starting a Level 4 HLA. There was a small increase (2.4 percentage points) in the proportion starting level 4 HLA programmes from 2018/19 to 2019/20 (Figure 2.5, Table B4).

Figure 2.5: HLA starts by level of programme, 2017/18 – 2019/20



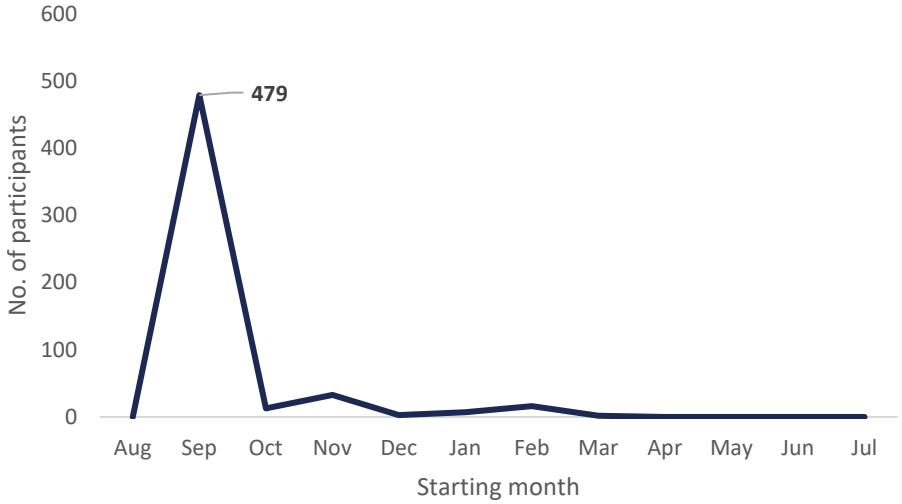
Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

START DATES

The start date is the date on which an enrolment begins. An academic year is defined by each provider and potentially will differ across all providers. An academic year traditionally starts in September and finishes in July the following year. The number of starts by month is calculated using the last Friday of each month.

As expected, the majority of start dates are at the beginning of each academic year, with most clustered around September. There was a peak of 479 HLA starts in September 2019 (Figure 2.6a & 2.6b, Table B5).

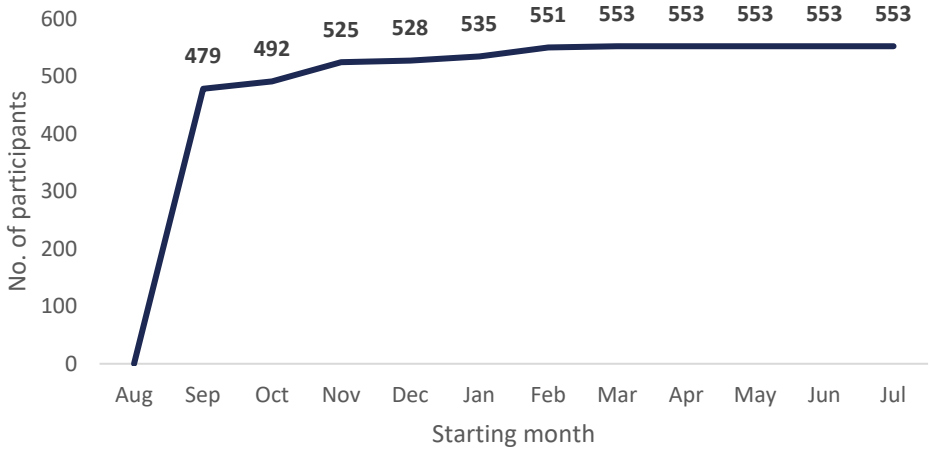
Figure 2.6a: Number of HLA starts by starting month, 2019/20



Source: NICS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

The majority of HLA participants started in September 2019. The final number of 553 participants had commenced by March 2020, there were no further HLA starts after this date.

Figure 2.6b: Cumulative total of HLA starts by starting month, 2019/20



Source: QLS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

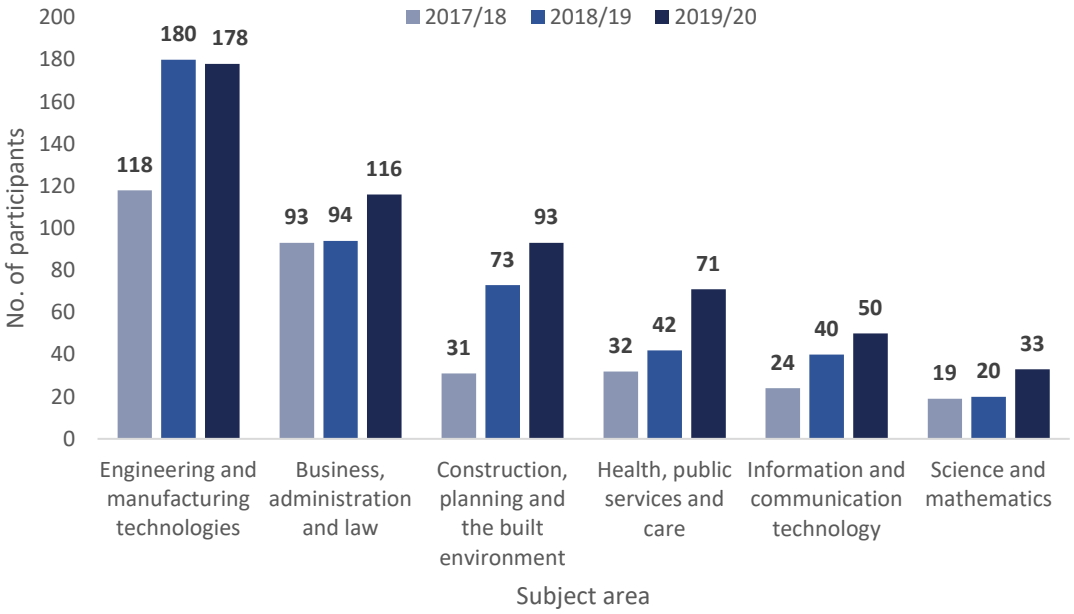
STARTS BY SUBJECT AREA

All regulated qualifications are assigned a Sector Subject Area (SSA) code by the Awarding Organisation, which indicates the high level topic of the course. Within this report, the term subject area is also used for sector subject area.

Figure 2.7 shows five of the six main subject sector areas recorded a year on year increase in HLA starts since the programme commenced in 2017/18.

Although 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' remained the most popular subject area for HLA starts; the increased uptake of HLAs in a range of other subject areas meant the proportion of starts on an 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' HLA went from 39.8% in 2018/19 to 32.2% in 2019/20 (Figure 2.7, Table B6).

Figure 2.7: HLA starts by the six most popular sector subject areas, 2017/18 – 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

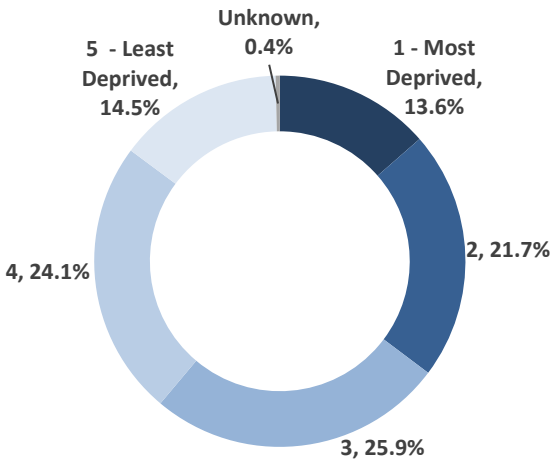
STARTS BY DEPRIVATION QUINTILE

Deprivation has been measured using the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM, 2017[1]), which assesses the level of deprivation of Super Output Areas (SOAs) across NI from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890). For analysis purposes these areas are categorised into five geographical groups, termed 'quintiles', each accounting for 20% of the 890 SOAs. Quintile 1 is the most deprived group of areas and Quintile 5 is the least deprived group of areas. Any enrolments which have either a non-NI address or no NI postcode are classified as 'unknown'.

Those in the 'most deprived' and 'least deprived' quintiles recorded the lowest number of HLA starts in 2019/20, 13.6% and 14.5% respectively (Figure 2.8a & 2.8b, Table B7).

[1] Please note further information on Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 is available at: NIMDM 2017

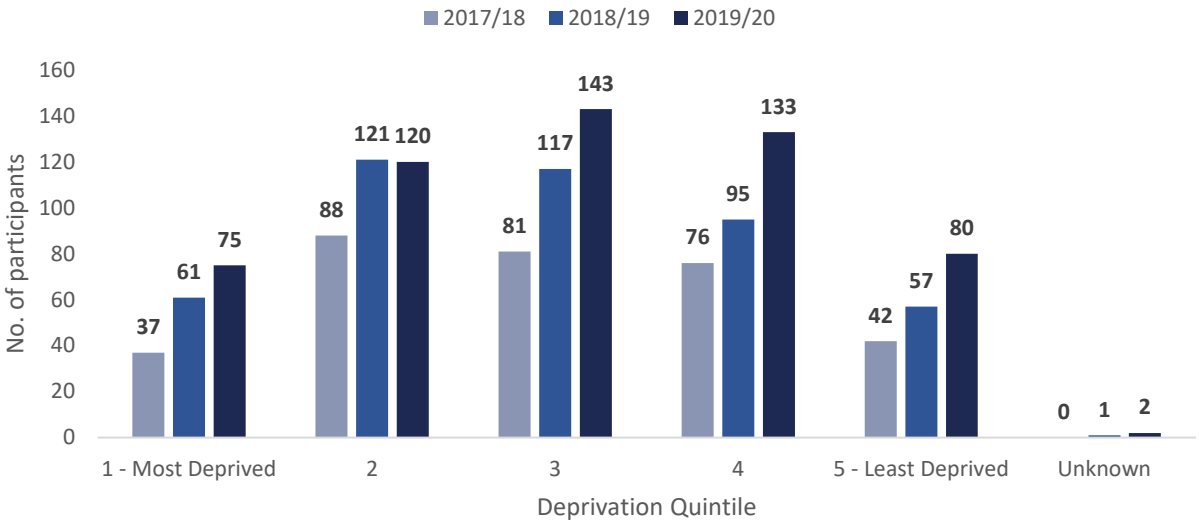
Figure 2.8a: Proportion of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

A similar pattern has emegered over the last three academic years. Figure 2.8b shows the number of HLA starts in the 'most deprived' and 'least deprived' quintiles were the lowest from 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Figure 2.8b: Number of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2017/18 – 2019/20



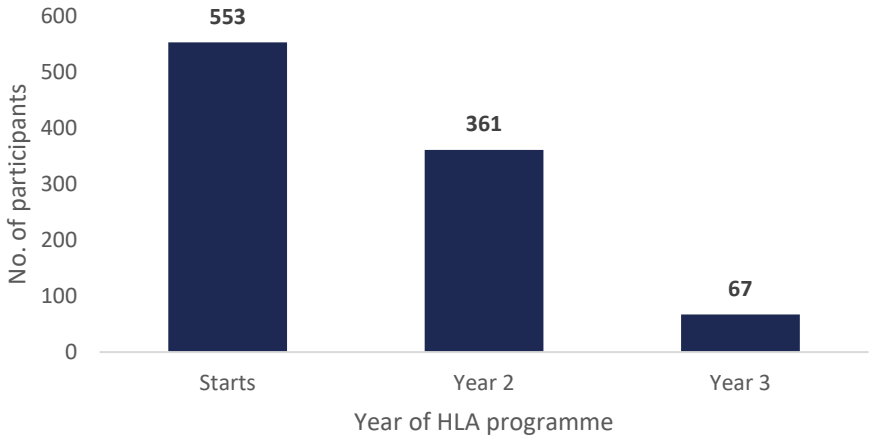
Source: QLS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

3. PARTICPANTS ON HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES (LEVEL 4/5), ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20

This section reports on the total number of participants enrolled on HLA level 4 and 5 programmes in the academic year 2019/20, this includes participants in all years of their HLA programme. The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme, but will be a minimum of two years.

In total there were 981 participants on HLA programmes in 2019/20; this included 553 starts, 361 in year 2 and 67 in year 3 (Figure 3.1, Table C1).

Figure 3.1: HLA particpants by year of programme, 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Almost seven in ten (68.8%) HLA participants were male in 2019/20; there were 306 females on an HLA programme compared to 675 males (Figure 3.2, Table C2). The age group of the participants on HLAs were evenly distributed. Approximately one third of participants fell into in each age category; 16 to 19 years – 335, 20 to 24 years – 326 and 25 and over – 320 (Figure 3.3, Table C3).

Figure 3.2: HLA participants by gender, 2019/20

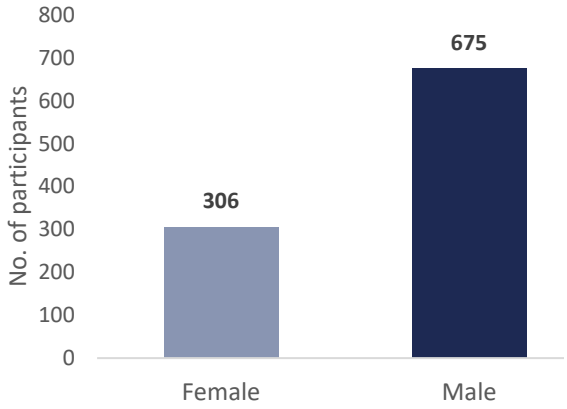
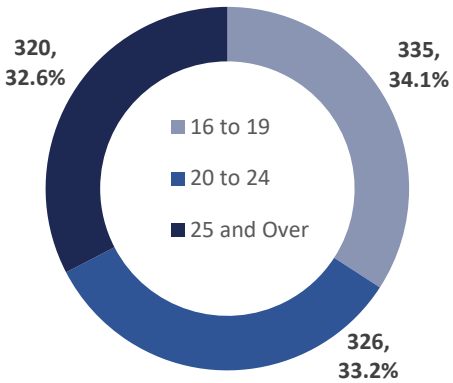


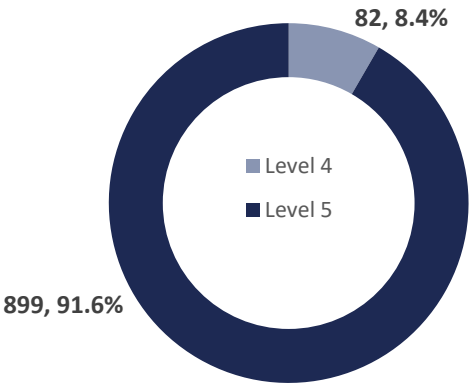
Figure 3.3: HLA participants by age group, 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

In 2019/20, the majority (91.6%) of participants were studying a level 5 programme (Figure 3.4, Table C4).

Figure 3.4: HLA participants by level of programme, 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

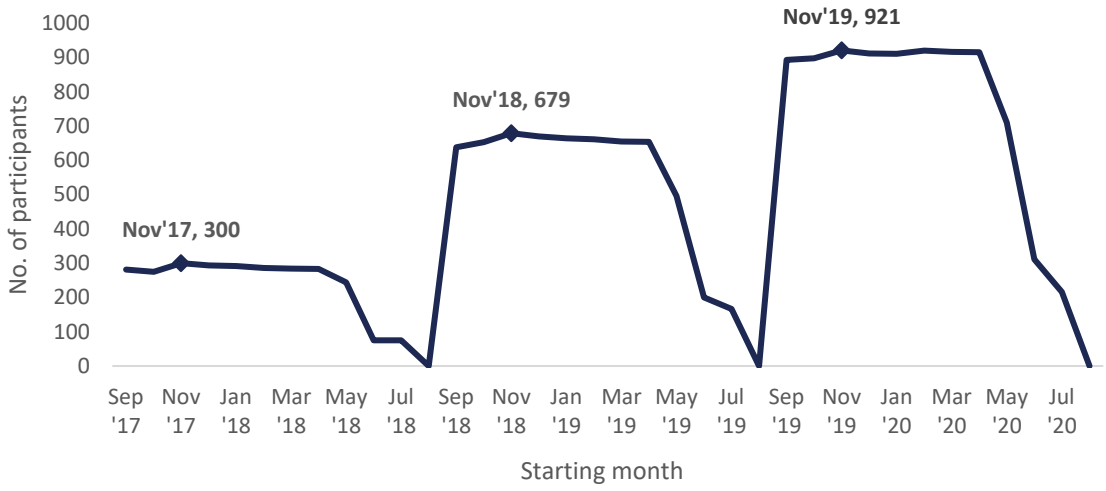
OCCUPANCY

The occupancy level of HLA programmes is the number of continuing/active participants at a particular point in time. The HLA programme began in 2017/18 and as HLAs are a minimum of two years, there is a cumulative effect for the number of participants on programme from 2018/19.

Figure 3.5 (Table C5) shows the total occupancy level on the last Friday of each month from 2017/18 to 2019/20. The number of participants filter off to zero in August as the academic year ends and then increase again in September as registration begins for the new academic year.

Figure 3.5 shows the total number of participants on HLA programmes peaks in November 2019, recording 921 participants.

Figure 3.5: Occupancy of HLA participants, 2017/18 – 2019/20



Source: QLS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

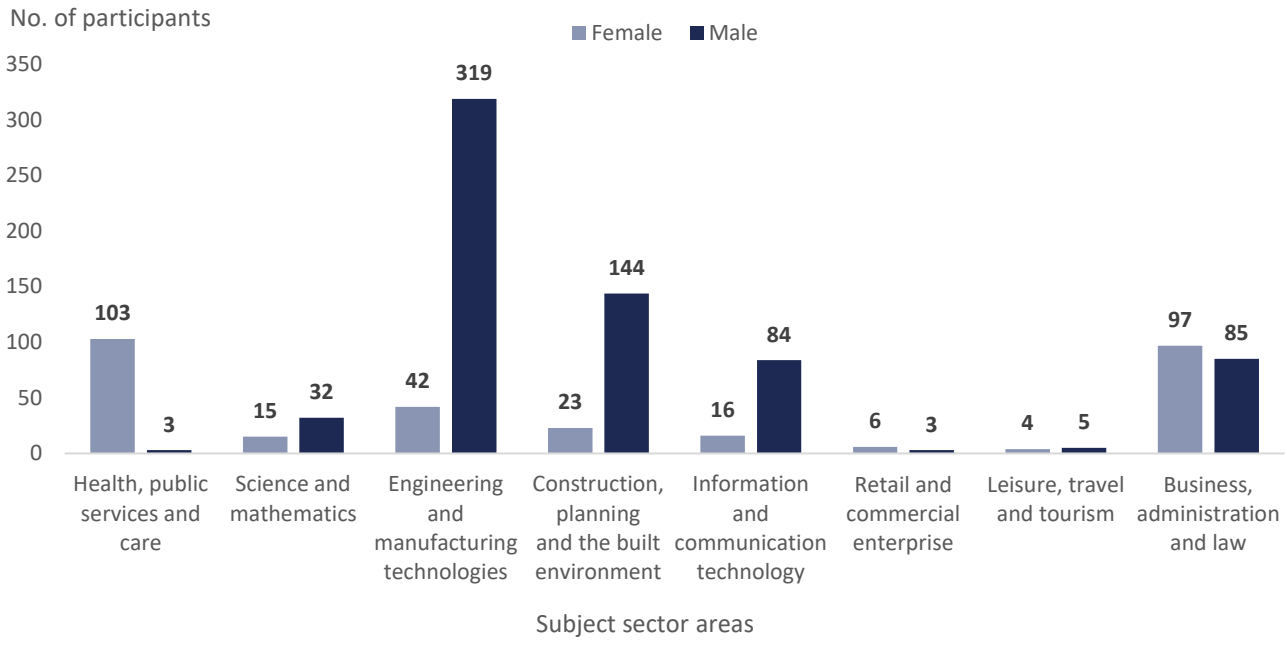
SECTOR SUBJECT AREA

Figure 3.6 shows the gender breakdown for each HLA sector subject area. Although overall there are more male participants on HLAs; it highlights the difference in HLA subject area choices between males and females.

In 2019/20, 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (36.8%) of all HLA participants. This subject area recorded a notable difference across gender; 13.7% (42) of female HLA participants were studying in this area compared to 47.3% (319) of males.

Almost one in five (18.6%) HLA participants were studying 'Business, administration and law'. This area was more popular with females, 31.7% of female HLA participants were studying an HLA in this area compared to 12.6% of males. Figure 3.6 shows HLAs in 'Construction, planning and the built environment' were male dominated and HLAs in 'Health, public services and care' were female dominated (Figure 3.6, Table C6).

Figure 3.6: HLA participants by Sector subject area and gender, 2019/20



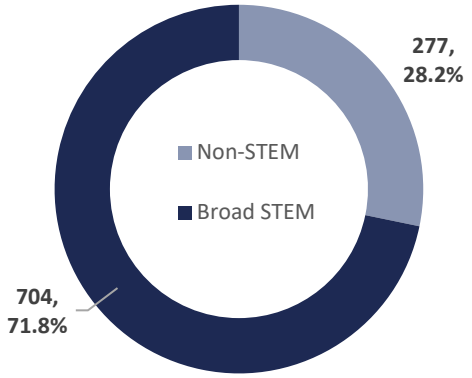
Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM)

In 2019/20, over seven in ten (71.8%) participants were studying HLA programmes in broad STEM areas, 704 participants. This reduced to 605 for narrow STEM; 61.7% (Figure 3.7, Table C7).

There were 277 (28.2%) participants studying an HLA in a non-STEM related area (Table C7).

Figure 3.7: HLA participants by STEM, 2019/20



HLAs BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT (LGD)

In 2019/20, the Local Government District (LGD) Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon recorded the highest (174) number of participants on an HLA and Mid and East Antrim the lowest (41). Comparing the numbers against the economically active population (those aged 16-64 years) using mid year population estimates, Table 3.1 shows Mid Ulster recorded the highest rate per 100,000 population and Belfast had the lowest (Figure 3.8, Table 3.1 and Table C8).

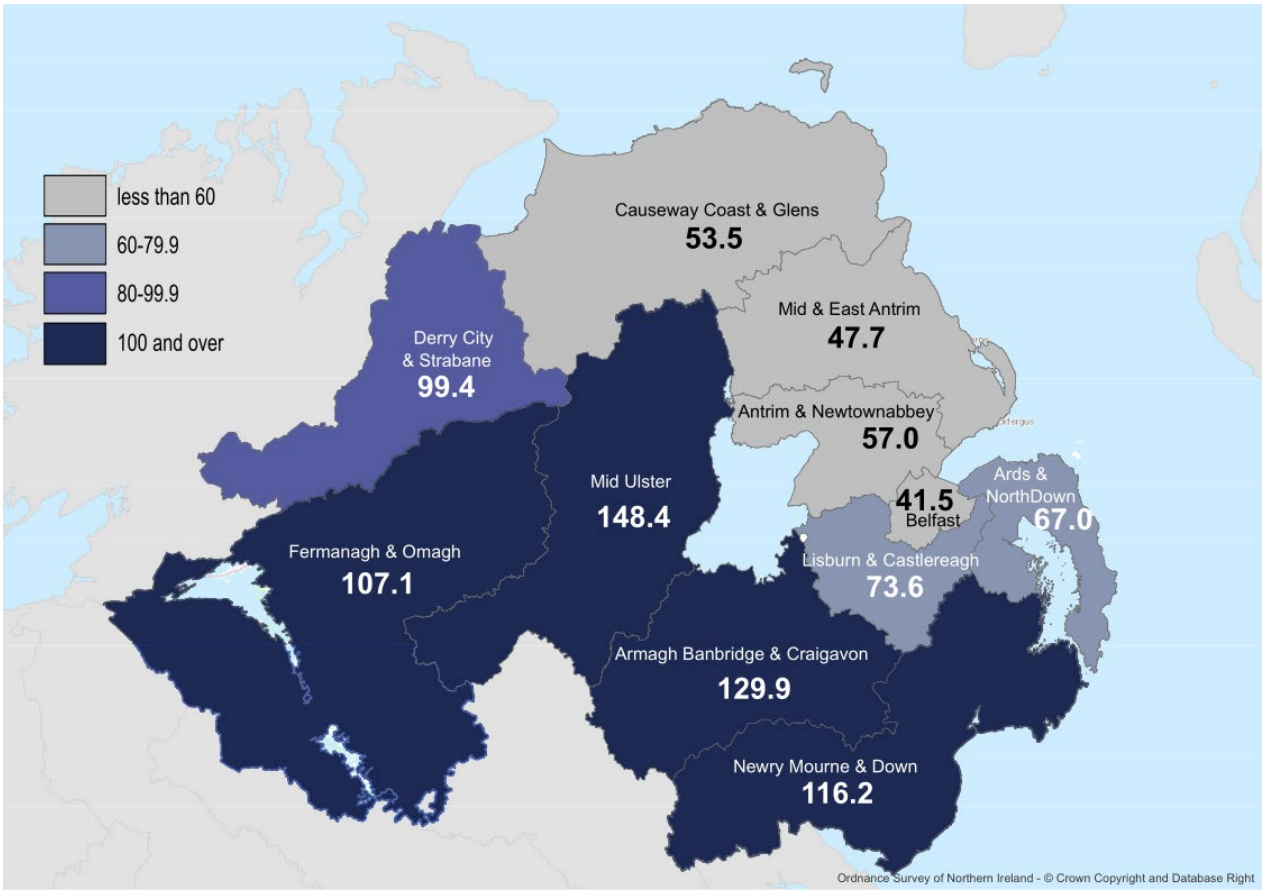
Table 3.1: HLA participants by LGD and Rate per 100,000 population aged 16-64 years, 2019/20

Local Government Districts (LGD 2014)	No. of participants on HLAs	Mid Year population estimates, 2019	Rate per 100,000 population aged 16-64 years
Antrim and Newtownabbey	51	89,460	57.0
Ards and North Down	65	97,003	67.0
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	174	133,918	129.9
Belfast	93	224,250	41.5
Causeway Coast and Glens	48	89,773	53.5
Derry City and Strabane	95	95,559	99.4
Fermanagh and Omagh	77	71,915	107.1
Lisburn and Castlereagh	67	90,975	73.6
Mid and East Antrim	41	86,011	47.7
Mid Ulster	137	92,309	148.4
Newry, Mourne and Down	130	111,845	116.2
Unknown	3	-	-
Total	**981**	**1,183,018**	**82.9**

Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System
NISRA Mid Year Population Estimates 2019

Figure 3.8 shows in 2019/20 there was a greater participation in HLAs by the LGDs in the southern part of Northern Ireland compared to the north.

Figure 3.8: HLA participants per 100,000 population (16-64 year olds) by LGD, 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20, CAFRE administration System
NISRA Mid Year Population Estimates 2019

4. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PERFORMANCE

A student can enrol on a course that is multiple years in length, but will typically only have the opportunity to obtain the qualification in final year of the course. This section focuses on final year participants only. It will explore the performance (retention, achievement and success) of final year HLA participants in academic year 2019/20.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Gaining a qualification for this analysis, is regarded as only full achievement. Partial achievements are not included in this analysis.

In academic year 2019/20, 301 HLA participants entered final year; 299 completed final year and 255 gained their final year qualification.

Retention Rate

Retention rate is calculated by the number of participants that completed final year against the number that enrolled in final year.

The overall retention rate for final year participants in 2019/20 was 99.3% (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

Achievement Rate

Achievement rate is calculated by the number of participants who achieved their final qualification against the number that **completed** their final year of study.

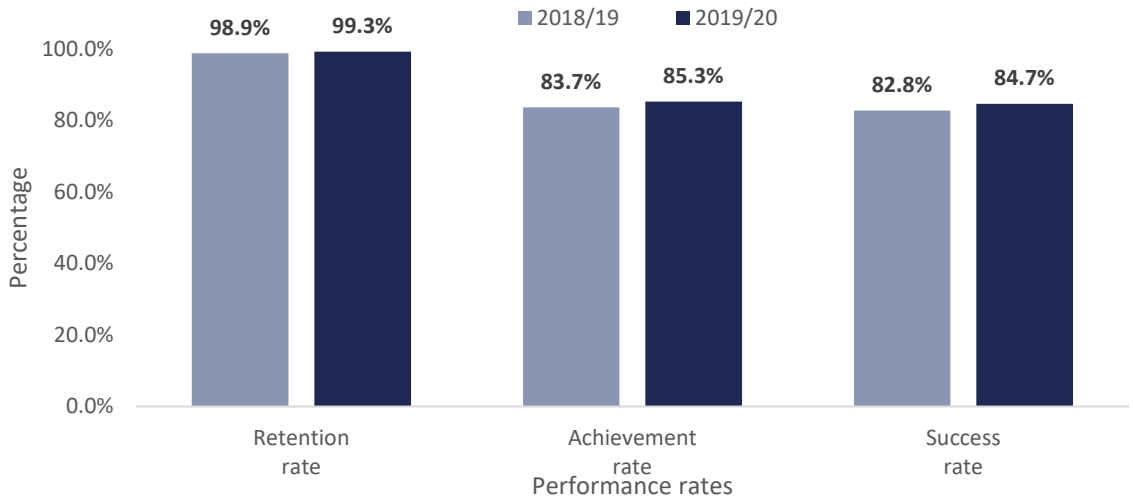
The overall achievement rate for final year individuals in 2019/20 was 85.3% (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

Success Rate

Success rate is the overall measure of performance, which is the number of participants who achieved their final year qualification against the number that **started** their final year.

The overall success rate for final year individuals in 2019/20 was 84.7%, this equated to 255 HLA participants successfully achieving their qualification (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

Figure 4.1: Performance of HLA participants, academic years 2018/19 & 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20

Table 4.1 : Performance of final year HLA participants, academic years 2018/19 – 2019/20

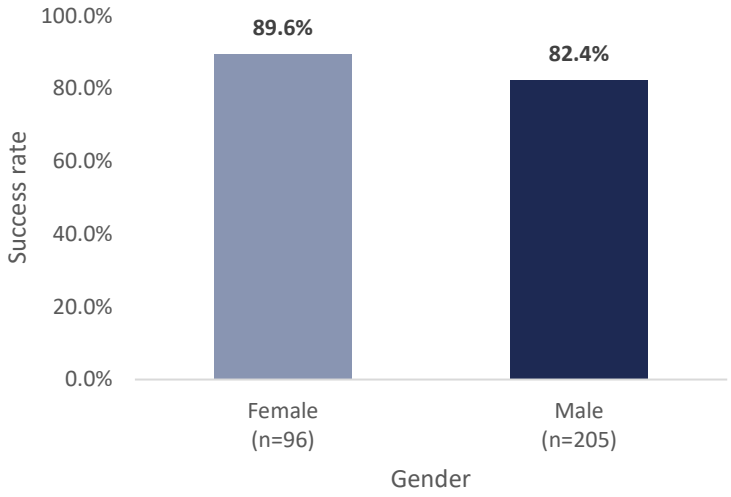
Year	Final Year Enrolment	Final Year Completer	Retention Rate	Final Year Achievement	Achievement rate	Success Rate
2019/20	301	299	**99.3%**	255	**85.3%**	**84.7%**
2018/19	180	178	**98.9%**	149	**83.7%**	**82.8%**

Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20

SUCCESS RATE BY GENDER

Females recorded a higher success rate than males, 89.6% of females in their final year gained their HLA qualification compared to 82.4% males (Figure 4.2, Table D2).

Figure 4.2: HLA participant success rate by gender, academic year 2019/20

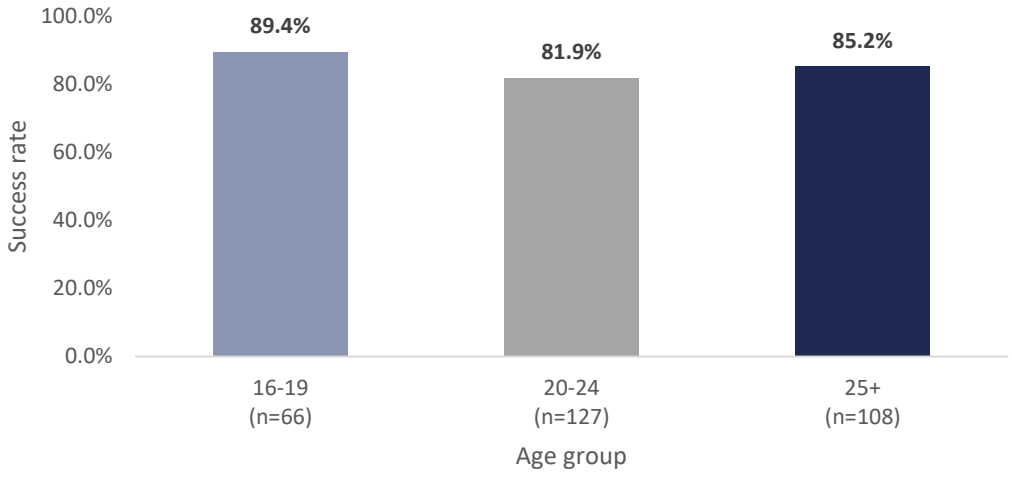


Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20

SUCCESS RATE BY AGE

Those aged 16-19 years reported the highest success rate, 89.4%, followed by the 25 and over age group, 85.2% and the 20-24 age group reported the lowest rate at 81.9% (Figure 4.3, Table D3).

Figure 4.3: HLA participant success rate by Age group, academic year 2019/20

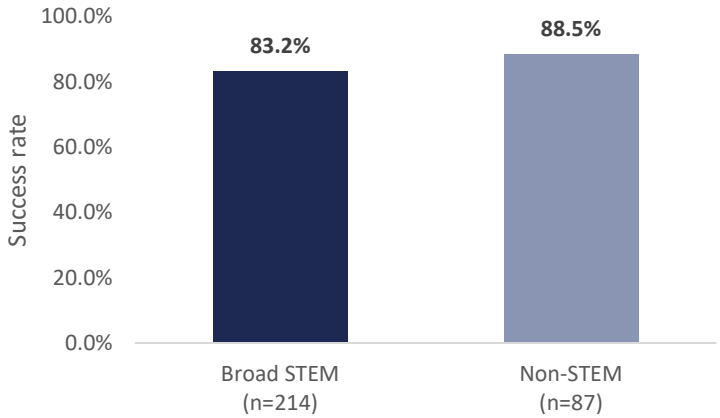


Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20

SUCCESS BY STEM INDICATOR

The success rate was higher in Non-STEM areas; 88.5% (77) while the success rate in Broad STEM areas was lower 83.2% (178). The success rate in Narrow-STEM was 85.1% (149), (Figure 4.4, Table D4).

Figure 4.4: HLA participant success rate by STEM indicator, academic year 2019/20



Source: NICIS, Consolidated Data return (CDR) 13/11/20

REASON FOR LEAVING

When a student withdraws from a course delivered in an FE college, the college attempt to establish the reason for leaving. For analysis purposes in this report, the list of options are grouped into six general headings, namely ‘College Terminated’, ‘Student Educational Reasons’, ‘Employment Reasons’, ‘Student Personal Reasons’, ‘Other’ and ‘Unknown’, (Table E1).

ANNEX A: NOTES TO READERS

SOURCE OF DATA

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the statistical returns listed below:

1. An extract of the Consolidated Data Return (CDR). The CDR came into operation for the 2013/14 academic year and is used for analysis related to the year 2017/18 and 2018/19. Each of the data returns are computerised data files consisting of individual records for each enrolment recorded by FE colleges during each academic year. Data is validated before the files are distributed to DfE. The CDR contains data from the live administrative database 'Northern Ireland College Information System' (NICIS). Data is sourced from Northern Ireland's six FE colleges; they operate across over 40 campuses and through over 400 outreach community locations. The six FE colleges are:

- Belfast Metropolitan College – BMC
- Northern Regional College – NRC
- North West Regional College - NWRC
- South Eastern Regional College - SERC
- Southern Regional College – SRC
- South West College - SWC

Please refer to DfE's role in further education for further detail about FE colleges in Northern Ireland.

2. CAFRE data return – this is an extract of data provided directly from the CAFRE administrative database. Numbers are relatively small and data can be validated with CAFRE administrators.

REVISIONS

Over time as more information becomes available, it is possible figures may be revised to improve quality and accuracy. Users will be informed of any revisions to the data.

2018/19 revision

The method for counting occupancy has been revised from 2017/18 therefore there are some small differences in the data reported in the 2017/18 bulletin and the 2018/19 bulletin. The data published in 2017/18 included only those HLA participants that were continuing at October 2018. This has been revised to include starts as they join the HLA programme and exclude participants only as they exit the HLA programme.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Year

An academic year period is defined by each provider and potentially will differ across all providers. An academic year traditionally starts in August and finishes in July the following year.

Age

Age is calculated at the 1st July of the previous academic year, based on the start date of the course.

Core Qualification

The core qualification is the qualification undertaken by the learner that is classed as the main component of their programme of study. The list of core qualifications undertaken in each academic year is presented in the table below.

Core Qualification Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Accounting Technicians Ireland Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Cyber Security and Networking Infrastructure		✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Business Management			✓
Foundation Degree in Civil Engineering	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Cloud and Application Development		✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Computing (Software Development)		✓	
Foundation Degree in Digital Marketing, Advertising & Communications			✓
Foundation Degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Energy Environment and Sustainability			✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Manufacturing (2 years)			✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Manufacturing (3 years)			✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Mechatronics (2 years)			✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Mechatronics (3 years)			✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering (Manufacturing Engineering)	✓	✓	
Foundation Degree in Engineering (Mechatronics)	✓	✓	
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Architectural Engineering and Energy	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Food and Drink Manufacture		✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Chemical Sciences)	✓	✓	✓

Core Qualification Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Life Sciences)	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Computing	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Computing Infrastructure	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Construction Engineering with Surveying	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms			✓
Foundation Degree in Science in International Hospitality & Tourism Management	✓	✓	
Foundation Degree in Science in Software Development	✓	✓	✓
IMI Level 4 Certificate in Advanced Automotive Studies		✓	✓
IMI Level 5 Diploma in Automotive Management (VRQ)	✓	✓	✓
LCL Level 4 Certificate in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing	✓	✓	
NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development (Management) (Wales and Northern Ireland)	✓	✓	✓
Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Construction and the Built Environment		✓	✓
Pearson Edexcel Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Adults' Management) Wales and Northern Ireland		✓	✓

Enrolments

The FE enrolment figures are simply a count of the number of enrolment records within the FE data return.

Final year

A student can enrol on a course that is multiple years in length, but those in their last year are regarded as ‘final year’, for example participants on a one year course or the second year of a two year course.

Funding streams

Enrolments delivered through FE colleges can be funded through several funding streams. Enrolments funded by the HLA programme within FE Colleges in Northern Ireland are classified as ‘Government Training’ within the funding group. For further information see Section 1.3 within FE Activity publication.

Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) programme

The purpose of the HLA programme is to increase skills levels and raise employer productivity. They provide a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway, focused on the skills needed by the local economy, with opportunities for the apprentice to work towards an internationally recognised qualification.

Level

If the FE college enrolment is level 3 or below and is regulated, then the level is derived from the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ). If the enrolment is not part of the RRQ, the level is based on the information entered against the enrolment by the FE College. Each regulated qualification has a level between entry level and level 8. Further information can be accessed at what qualification levels mean.

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Quintile 2017

The analysis presented in the supplementary tables utilises five groups or quintiles of super output areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. These five groups are determined based on level of relative deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

The NISRA website provides further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland.

Occupancy

The volume of FE college enrolments which are actively continuing on their course at a particular point in the academic year.

Performance Rates

Retention rate is defined as the proportion of the number of HLA participants who complete their final year of study to the number of final year HLA participants. 'Completers' include any enrolments not classified as 'Withdrawn' or 'Transferred'.

$$\textbf{Retention rate} = \frac{\text{Number of HLA participants who completed final year}}{\text{Number of HLA participants enrolled in final year}}$$

Achievement rate is defined as the proportion of HLA participants who complete their final year of study and achieve their qualification to the number of HLA participants who complete their final year of study.

$$\textbf{Achievement rate} = \frac{\text{Number of HLA participants completed and achieved HLA}}{\text{Number of HLA participants who completed final year}}$$

Success rate is recognised as the overall measure of performance and is defined as the proportion of HLA participants who complete their final year of study and achieve their HLA qualification to the number of participants in final year of their HLA.

$$\textbf{Success rate} = \frac{\text{Number of HLA participants completed and achieved HLA}}{\text{Number of HLA participants enrolled in final year}}$$

Programme of Study

The programme of study is the individual or group of qualifications from the approved curriculum for the HLA. This includes, as a minimum, the most relevant vocational qualification at level 4 or higher (core qualification), additional qualifications requested by employers.

Reason for leaving

The reason for leaving is self-reported by the student after they withdraw from their course at an FE college.

When a student withdraws from a course delivered in an FE college, the college attempt to establish the reason for leaving. The options in the table below are available for selection. For analysis purposes in this report, the list of options are grouped into six general headings, namely 'College', 'Student Educational Reasons', 'Employment Reasons', 'Student Personal Reasons', 'Other' and 'Unknown'.

Code	COLLEGE
C01	College terminated attendance - academic
C02	College terminated attendance - course cancelled
C03	College terminated attendance - discipline
C04	College terminated attendance - non-attendance - unable to make contact
	STUDENT EDUCATIONAL REASONS
E01	Chose a Training or Apprenticeship scheme
E02	Course no longer related to plans
E03	Course not what student thought it would be
E04	Course too demanding
E05	Disliked the course content
E06	Issue with the tutor
E07	Move to another FE college
E08	Not satisfied with the course
E09	Other course related reasons
E10	Physical difficulties in accessing classroom
E11	Returned to school
E12	Transfer to university
	EMPLOYMENT REASONS
M01	Became self employed
M02	Changed job (including position)
M03	Employer withdrew support - Financial
M04	Gone into employment
M05	Lost job
M06	Other employment related reasons
M07	Relocation - due to job
M08	To do with the employer
	STUDENT PERSONAL REASONS
P01	Death
P02	Family/Personal Issues
P03	Financial - cannot afford fees
P04	Financial - cost of transport (public and private)
P05	Health - Addictions
P06	Health - Dependents
P07	Health - Own
P08	Other personal reasons
P09	Pregnancy
P10	Relocation - family
P11	Travel difficulties
	OTHER
T01	Other
	UNKNOWN
U01	Unknown

Regulated enrolments

Regulated qualifications are those that are reviewed, recognised and monitored by the regulatory bodies in order to make sure that they meet specific criteria and quality standards. Traditionally, 'Regulated enrolments' are regarded as enrolments on:

- qualifications at 'level 3 or below' which appear on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ) or part of the Department's Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications (PLAQ/Access list), and;
- Higher Education qualifications (at 'level 4 or above') includes Vocational Qualifications Levels 4 to 8.

Sector Subject Area

For regulated provision delivered in the FE sector, the Sector Subject Area (SSA) code is derived from the official OFQUAL Register of Regulated Qualifications based on the qualification or unit code.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Within data from FE colleges, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) provision or 'Broad' STEM provision is identified by subject category. 'Broad' STEM enrolments are regarded as those on courses of 'Medicine, Dentistry and Allied Subjects', 'Biological and Physical Sciences', 'Agriculture', 'Mathematics and IT', 'Engineering and Technology', and 'Architecture, Building and Planning'. A subset of this cohort is termed 'Narrow' STEM and is identified as those enrolment records within courses of 'Biological and Physical Sciences', 'Mathematics and IT', and 'Engineering and Technology'.

Section 75 categories

Equality related data, such as community background, disability and ethnicity, are self-reported by the student during the data capture process within FE colleges. This information is available within the supplementary tables S1 to S6.

Dependant counts are based on individual questions, which is self-reported by the student, if they have any dependants which are adults, children or a person with a disability (Table S2).

Disability is determined by the response to the question '*Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?*' (Table S3).

Department for the Economy
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

European Union
European Social Fund
Northern Ireland

FURTHER ENQUIRIES

Further details about any of the statistics in this statistical bulletin can be obtained from:

Seana McIlwaine/Rebecca Fullerton
Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch
Department for the Economy
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8FD

Telephone: 028 9025 7708
E-mail:
rebecca.fullerton@economy-ni.gov.uk
Seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk

Media enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office in Netherleigh:

Department for the Economy
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
BELFAST
BT4 2JP
Telephone: 028 9052 9604
Email: pressoffice@economy-ni.gov.uk

This statistical bulletin and other statistical bulletins published by Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch are available to download free from the internet at:

Higher and further education training statistics

This document is available in other formats upon request.

NISRA
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency