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Reporting year 2025

Education and training statistics for the UK

This is the latest release



Published 13 November 2025

Next update November 2026

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This release compiles information on education systems across the United Kingdom. Education is devolved in the UK, so each part of the United Kingdom has a separate education system.

In this release, there are sections focusing on the school system: numbers of schools, pupils and teachers, and [pupil to teacher ratios \(PTR\)](#) , covering the 2024/25 academic year .

This is followed by sections on further and higher education, which includes the number of providers and the number of students for the 2023/24 academic year. There is also a section on young adults (aged between 16-24) who are [not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#) .

The next sections focus on students' qualifications taken in the 2023/24 academic year. Given the different qualifications systems, headline measures and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not suitable to present a direct comparative picture of pupil performance across the UK. The highest qualifications held by adults (aged 19-64) in the UK as of quarter 4 2024 are then displayed.

Finally, there is a section showing government education expenditure in the UK to the 2024-25 [financial year](#) .

For the sections covering NEET and highest qualifications for adults aged 19-64, data is used from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Labour Force

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Methodologies

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Survey (LFS) to produce these statistics. Since 2019, ONS have faced challenges around the falling number of responses to the LFS which has led to increased sampling variability. LFS datasets are weighted in line with population estimates. In recent years there have been several reweighting exercises to address changes in international migration and impacts as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Timeseries comparisons should be viewed with some caution, and those specific sections should be considered 'Official Statistics in Development'. Comparisons of levels prior to this period should therefore be viewed with caution.

 Search this page

Headline facts and figures - 2025

Number of pupils

**10,046,0
26**

In 2024/25, maintained schools - decrease of 48,205 from 2022/23

Number of FE students

**3,110,81
5**

In 2023/24 - decrease of 2,055 from 2022/23

Number of HE students

**2,991,10
0**

In 2023/24- 72% total undergraduate, 28% total postgraduate

Full-time equivalent number of teachers

565,523

In 2024/25, maintained schools - decrease of 1390 from 2023/24

Percentage of 19-64-year-olds with NQF level 4 or above

50%

68% for NQF level 3+ and 84% level 2+, Q4 2024

Percentage of 16–24-year-olds NEETs

12.8%

In April to June 2025, up 0.1 percentage points on the same quarter in 2024.

- Pupil numbers in maintained schools decreased by 48,205 (0.5%) in the UK between 2022/23 and 2024/25. Complete data was not available for Northern Ireland to compare UK totals in 2023/24.
- Teacher numbers in maintained schools decreased by 1390 in the UK in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, driven by decreases in primary schools. Teacher numbers decreased in England, Scotland and Wales, but increased in Northern Ireland.
- Pupil to teacher ratios were lowest in Scotland (13.3), and similar in Northern Ireland (17.1), England (18.0), and Wales (18.9).
- 50% of 19-64 year olds in the UK were qualified to NQF level 4 or above in Q4 of 2024. 68% were qualified to level 3 or above and 84% to level 2 or above.
- The total number of students in further education (FE) in the UK decreased by 0.1% in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. Student numbers rose in England and Wales and fell in Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- The proportion of young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in April to June 2025 has increased by 0.1 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2024.

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Proposed changes to this publication series

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The Department for Education regularly reviews its statistical publications for quality and relevance of content and to ensure the statistics meet user needs. Upon reviewing this publication, the Department has identified that in some sections statistics are not widely engaged with and in other sections there is duplication of statistics published elsewhere. **The department is proposing to streamline the Education and Training Statistics for the UK publication series.** Where the publication adds new statistics and insights not published elsewhere, we will continue to publish yearly statistics. Where the publication is duplicative or low on engagement, we propose signposting our users to other existing published statistics. These changes will allow us to further review other sections of Education and Training Statistics and to explore the feasibility of expanding the publication on other areas of the education system, such as attainment.

More information on these changes can be found below and in the methodology. **We invite users to provide feedback** on these changes, please send this to internationalevidence.statistics@education.gov.uk by **1st April 2026**.

Statistics available elsewhere

Due to low engagement and duplication, in future publications we are proposing to **cease publishing certain sections** of the publication, and instead signpost users to the following existing statistics.

Higher Education – statistics on students by type of degree, sex, study mode and subject are all available in the [Higher Education Statistics Agency publications \(opens in new tab\)](#) (HESA). Education and training statistics provide one novel aggregation – overseas and domestic students. A more granular breakdown is available in the HESA publications, with breakdowns by place of permanent address within and beyond the UK.

Schools – statistics for schools are available via each devolved government's own statistical publications:

- England: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- Scotland: via the summary statistics for schools and pupil census supplementary statistics series on [School education statistics - gov.scot \(opens in new tab\)](#)
- Wales: [Maintained schools and pupils by local authority, type of school and year | StatsWales \(opens in new tab\)](#) for maintained schools and [Schools by local authority, region and year \(opens in new tab\)](#) for independent schools
- Northern Ireland: via the schools and pupils in Northern Ireland publication series [School enrolments - Northern Ireland summary data | Department of Education \(opens in new tab\)](#).

NEET – UK statistics are available at [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\) - Office for National Statistics \(opens in new tab\)](#).

Pupil to teacher ratios (PTR) - statistics for PTRs are available via each devolved government's own statistical publications:

- England: [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

- Scotland: [Teacher census supplementary statistics - gov.scot \(opens in new tab\)](#)
- Wales: [Schools' census results | GOV.WALES \(opens in new tab\)](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Education workforce | Department of Education \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Education Expenditure – UK statistics are available in the [Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses publication series \(opens in new tab\)](#).

Post compulsory institutions – this dataset shows the number of post-compulsory educational institutions in each nation and a total for the UK. It only features as a downloadable table in the catalogue, rather than on the publication page. This data is available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency and Association of Colleges websites:

[HESA - Experts in higher education data and analysis \(opens in new tab\)](#) - see the provider data consolidated collection.

[List of colleges in the UK | Association of Colleges \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Please provide any feedback to us on the impact of changing the release to signpost to these statistics by emailing internationalevidence.statistics@education.gov.uk.

Statistics with no proposed changes

We are planning to continue publication of current sections on Further Education, Pupils, Highest Qualification, Teacher, and Qualification headlines.

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School numbers

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In 2024/25, there were 29,532 maintained schools across the UK, a decrease of 47 schools (0.2%) compared to 2023/24. The decrease is seen across all nations in the UK, with the largest decrease being in Scotland (18).

The largest decrease in maintained schools in the UK by phase was at primary level,

with a decrease of 50 (0.2%). This phase saw the biggest decrease across all four parts of the UK.

Data on the number of schools in each part of the UK (and each region in England) is available in the underlying data.

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Number of schools by school type, United Kingdom, between 2016/17 and 2024/25

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	...
Nursery	3,022	3,037	3,039	3,069	3,079	3,117	
Primary	20,913	20,851	20,820	20,807	20,806	20,788	
Middle	10	13	19	22	23	23	
Secondary	4,168	4,190	4,188	4,190	4,190	4,204	
Special	1,543	1,551	1,532	1,536	1,546	1,550	
Total maintained	29,656	29,642	29,598	29,624	29,644	29,682	
Non-maintained mainstream	2,445	2,463	2,466	2,403	2,518	2,543	
Total	32,102	32,106	32,065	32,028	32,163	32,226	

[Show full screen table](#)

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Primary and secondary figures include middle schools as deemed. Secondary schools include all-through schools.
2. In England, special schools include [alternative provision](#) schools.

[Show 4 more footnotes](#)

Source: Department for Education; Welsh Government; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Department of Education

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Pupil numbers

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The number of pupils in maintained schools in the UK declined by 0.5% (48,200 pupils) between 2022/23 and 2024/25. A decrease is seen across all 4 devolved nations in the UK, with a 2.1% decrease in Wales the largest change in percentage terms. Maintained pupils decreased by 0.1%, 0.4% and 0.7% across Northern Ireland, England and Scotland respectively. Comparisons should not be made to 2023/24 at the UK level, as data for Northern Ireland is only partially complete for all school phases except nursery. Comparisons can be drawn for England, Scotland and Wales, where the combined total number of pupils in maintained schools decreased by 0.6% in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.

At the UK level, the number of pupils in state-funded nurseries and primary schools fell by 1.9% and 2.1% respectively between 2022/23 and 2024/25. In contrast, the number of pupils in state-funded secondary schools and special schools increased by 1.1%

and 11.5% respectively across the same period. Across England Scotland and Wales between 2023/24 and 2024/25, the combined total number of pupils decreased in nursery and primary schools by 1% and 1.3% respectively, stayed stable in secondary schools and increased by 5.1% in special schools.

Data on the number of pupils by sex and school type in each part of the UK (and each region of England) is available in the underlying data along with data by age and school type at a UK level.

► Export options

Number of pupils by school type, United Kingdom, between 2016/17 and 2024/25

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/
Nursery	147,477	145,389	145,267	144,992	134,5
Primary	5,544,597	5,577,104	5,586,408	5,568,599	5,509,6
Middle	9,163	12,153	17,661	20,746	22,3
Secondary	3,819,297	3,853,207	3,926,638	4,017,696	4,117,5
Special	142,325	149,267	155,636	162,001	165,8
Total maintained	9,662,859	9,737,120	9,831,610	9,914,034	9,949,8
Non-maintained mainstream	596,919	595,872	594,844	581,265	583,7
Total	10,259,778	10,332,992	10,426,454	10,495,299	10,533,6

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Primary and secondary figures include middle schools as deemed. Secondary schools include all-through schools.
2. In England, special schools include [alternative provision](#) schools.

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Source: Department for Education; Welsh Government; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Department of Education

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Teacher numbers

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The overall number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers working in maintained schools was 565,523 FTE in 2024/25, a decrease of 1,390 (0.25%) from 2023/24.

The FTE decrease across the UK was driven by primary schools, where FTE decreased by 3,810. FTE also decreased by 43 in Nursery schools. FTE increased in Secondary and Special schools by 1,123 and 1,116 respectively.

FTE decreases were seen across all parts of the UK except Northern Ireland. FTE decreased by 2.3% (565 FTE) in Wales, 1.2% (625 FTE) in Scotland and 0.1% (430 FTE) in England. In Northern Ireland, FTE increased by 1.2% (230 FTE).

Teacher characteristics - Sex

The teaching workforce in maintained schools across the UK is consistently predominantly female: 74% in 2024/25, the same as the previous three years. Across the UK 85% of FTE at primary level are female and 64% at secondary level in 2024/25, the same as the previous three years.

Data on the number of teachers by sex and school type in each part of the UK (and each region of England) is available in the underlying data.

- ▶ Export options

Full-time equivalent number of teachers by school type, United Kingdom, between 2019/20 and 2024/25

	Full-time equivalent number of teachers					
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Nursery	2,213	2,112	2,022	2,013	1,996	1,953
Primary	264,810	267,148	267,518	266,225	262,535	258,725
Middle	1,157	1,223	1,271	1,507	1,662	1,729
Secondary	247,381	253,477	258,620	261,535	262,930	264,052
Special	27,882	28,675	29,846	31,168	32,333	33,449
Total maintained	548,086	557,363	563,896	567,372	566,913	565,523
Non-maintained mainstream	77,059	79,069	72,968	74,532	76,575	75,493
Total	625,145	636,432	636,864	641,904	643,488	641,016

[Show full screen table](#)[Data symbols !\[\]\(98b0d0ccc757b6bc0d84eb54a134e84b_img.jpg\)](#)

Footnotes

1. Primary and secondary figures include middle schools as deemed. Secondary schools include all-through schools.
2. In England, special schools include [alternative provision](#) schools.

[Show 5 more footnotes](#)

Source: Department for Education; Welsh Government; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Department of Education

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Pupil to teacher ratios (PTRs)

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Pupil to teacher ratios (PTRs) show the number of pupils per teacher. Across the UK, the PTRs follow a similar pattern across all levels of education, with Scotland having the lowest PTRs and England, Wales and Northern Ireland all having very similar PTRs.

PTRs in Scotland and Wales increased slightly to 13.3 and 18.9 respectively, compared to 13.2 and 18.6 in 2023/24. In Wales and Scotland, the increase in PTRs is driven by a larger decrease in teachers relative to the decrease in pupils.

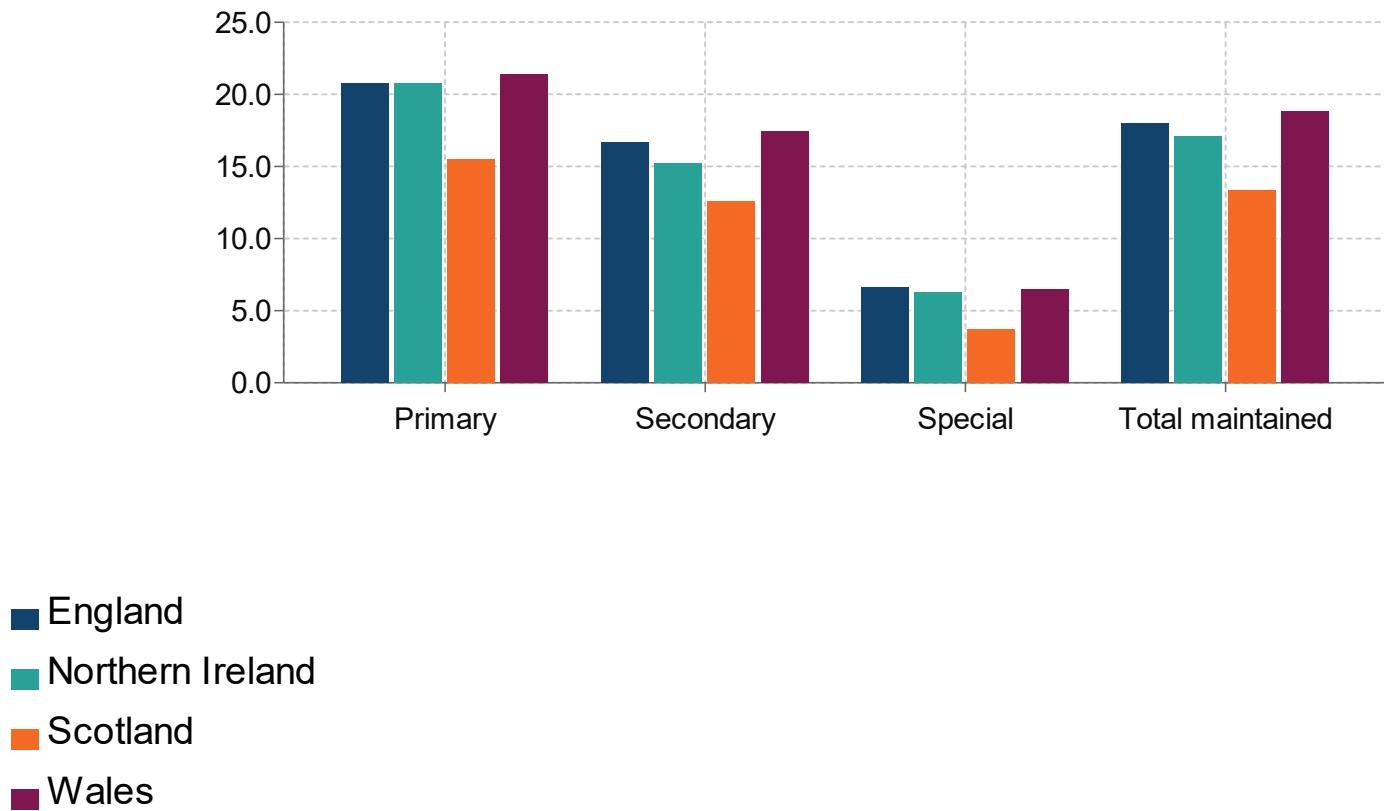
PTRs decreased between 2023/24 and 2024/25, from 18.1 to 18 in England, and from 17.4 to 17.1 in Northern Ireland. In England, the decrease in PTRs is driven by a smaller decrease in teachers relative to the decrease in pupils. In Northern Ireland, the decrease in PTRs is driven by a combination of a decrease in pupils and an increase in teachers.

Chart

Table

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Pupil to teacher ratios in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland by school type, 2024/25



Footnotes

1. In England, special schools include [alternative provision](#) schools.
2. In England, the primary pupil-teacher ratio includes local authority (LA) maintained nurseries.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Department for Education; Welsh Government; Scottish Government; Northern Ireland Department of Education

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Further and Higher education

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2019/20 and 2020/21 data covers the months of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). This may have affected enrolment figures and therefore extra care should be taken in comparing and interpreting trends over time.

Further Education Students

The total number of students in further education (FE) in the UK stayed stable in 2023/24 (-0.1%), rising in England (1.8%) and Wales (2.9%) and falling in Northern Ireland (-3.3%) and Scotland (-18.9%) compared to 2022/23. Since 2015/16 the total number of FE students across the UK has decreased by 16.1%. Decreases over this period are seen in each part of the UK except in Scotland where the number of FE students has slightly increased (0.6%) across the same period.

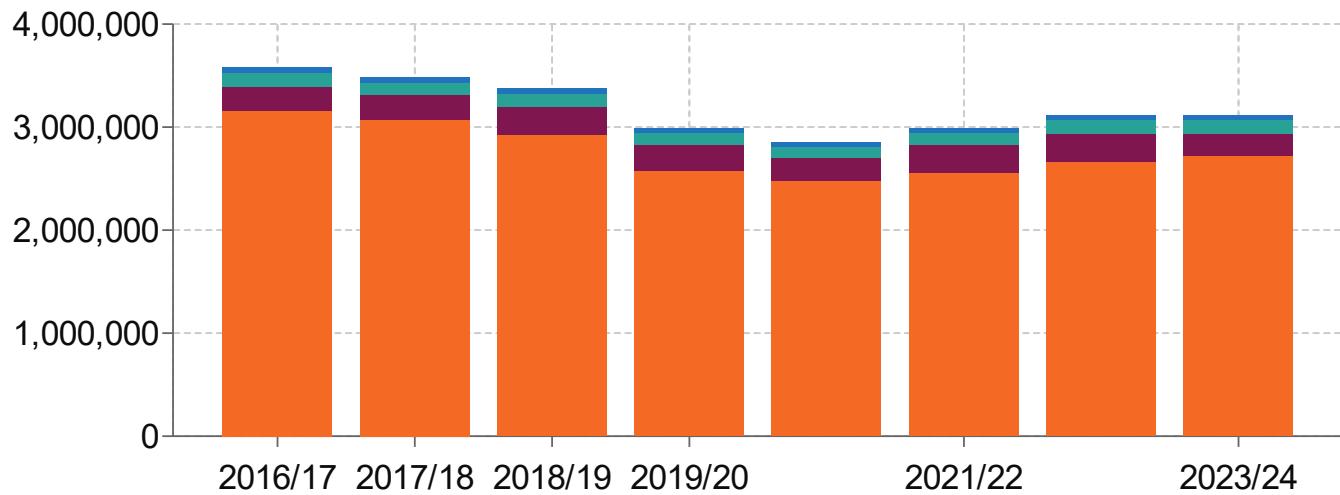
[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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Number of FE students in each part of the United Kingdom, between 2016/17 and 2023/24

Number of
FE
students



■ Northern Ireland
■ Wales
■ Scotland
■ England

Footnotes

1. Totals include further education students at further education colleges or higher education providers.
2. In England, student numbers by mode of study (e.g. part-time, work-based learning) are unavailable.

[Show 4 more footnotes](#)

Source: Department for Education; Welsh Government; Scottish Funding Council; Northern Ireland Department for the Economy

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In 2023/24, females accounted for 55% of FE students across the UK. Whilst there were more female FE students than male FE students, males were more likely to participate in FE at a younger age than females were. 69% of males participating in FE were less than 30 years old. For females this figure was 50%. In addition, there were twice as many females in FE aged 30 and over than there were males.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Number of FE students by age and sex in each part of the United Kingdom, 2023/24

		Female	Male	Total
England	<16	3,625	2,910	6,535
	16	183,190	197,730	380,925
	17	161,450	174,165	335,620
	18	69,490	91,670	161,160
	19	45,170	68,905	114,075
	20	33,015	50,345	83,360
	21	29,380	41,180	70,555
	22	29,495	36,335	65,830
	23	29,275	32,745	62,020

	24	28,395	28,940	57,340
	25	27,300	25,365	52,665
	26	27,040	22,855	49,895
	27	26,190	20,710	46,900
	28	26,340	19,545	45,885
	29	27,030	18,770	45,795
	30+	765,320	370,715	1,136,035
	Unknown	210	85	290
	Total	1,511,920	1,202,970	2,714,890
Scotland	<16	22,050	21,865	46,350
	16	8,595	9,660	18,685
	17	7,725	10,190	18,335
	18	4,645	8,490	13,445
	19	2,975	6,325	9,480
	20	2,180	4,890	7,200
	21	1,770	3,465	5,340
	22	1,705	2,770	4,550
	23	1,695	2,250	4,045
	24	1,580	1,900	3,545
	25	1,675	1,790	3,525
	26	1,685	1,665	3,425

	27	1,650	1,505	3,205
	28	1,670	1,380	3,120
	29	1,705	1,325	3,105
	30+	45,675	28,345	75,700
	Unknown	0	0	0
	Total	108,985	107,810	223,045
Wales	<16	15	45	60
	16	9,020	10,055	19,310
	17	7,615	8,910	16,780
	18	3,580	5,245	8,950
	19	1,880	3,340	5,290
	20	1,270	2,310	3,605
	21	1,045	1,870	2,930
	22	1,130	1,595	2,745
	23	1,125	1,360	2,500
	24	1,135	1,225	2,370
	25	1,230	1,160	2,400
	26	1,200	1,180	2,395
	27	1,175	1,100	2,280
	28	1,120	1,085	2,215
	29	1,185	1,025	2,220

	30+	31,355	23,175	54,685
	Unknown	5	5	10
	Total	65,080	64,675	130,745
Northern Ireland	<16	955	1,770	2,725
	16	2,840	4,070	6,910
	17	2,630	3,730	6,360
	18	1,700	2,530	4,230
	19	875	1,920	2,795
	20	520	1,050	1,570
	21	445	740	1,185
	22	380	520	900
	23	300	405	705
	24	305	375	680
	25	300	340	640
	26	250	285	535
	27	250	230	480
	28	240	205	450
	29	275	200	475
	30+	7,335	4,160	11,495
	Unknown	5	low	5
	Total	19,605	22,530	42,135

United Kingdom	<16	26,645	26,590	55,675
	16	203,650	221,515	425,830
	17	179,420	196,995	377,090
	18	79,420	107,930	187,785
	19	50,900	80,490	131,640
	20	36,985	58,595	95,735
	21	32,635	47,255	80,015
	22	32,715	41,220	74,025
	23	32,395	36,760	69,265
	24	31,415	32,440	63,930
	25	30,500	28,660	59,230
	26	30,175	25,985	56,250
	27	29,265	23,545	52,870
	28	29,375	22,215	51,665
	29	30,195	21,320	51,595
	30+	849,690	426,390	1,277,910
	Unknown	220	90	305
	Total	1,705,590	1,397,980	3,110,815

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Footnotes

1. Totals include further education students at further education colleges or higher education providers.
2. In England, student numbers by mode of study (e.g. part-time, work-based learning) are unavailable.

[Show 4 more footnotes](#)

Source: Department for Education; Welsh Government; Scottish Funding Council; Northern Ireland Department for the Economy

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Higher education students

In 2023/24, there were 2.99 million students in higher education (HE) in UK further education colleges or higher education providers. 64% of HE students were studying first degrees (also known as bachelor's degrees), 25% were studying a masters or other postgraduate courses, 4% were undertaking a PhD and 8% were on other undergraduate courses.

More females than males made up the overall student population (56%) and females made up a greater share at every level.

The most popular subject was Business and Management with 21% of all students enrolled (over 610,000 students), followed by Subjects allied to Medicine (12%) and Social Sciences (10%). Business and Management had the third most equal split between male and female students after Biological and Sport Sciences and Geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences). The subjects with the most unequal splits towards females were veterinary sciences (84% female) and psychology (82% female), and towards males were engineering and technology (79% male) and computing (75% male).

The six subjects with the highest enrolment are presented in the chart below by sex.

The numbers of students studying subjects other than those in the top six by enrolment are not presented in the chart below, but the figures are available in the table and in the underlying data as well as by level of study.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Number of HE students by level of study, subject and sex, United Kingdom, 2023/24

		2023/24		
		Female	Male	Total
Total	Agriculture, food and related studies	10,175	5,300	15,530
Undergraduate	Architecture, building and planning	16,470	30,620	47,145
	Biological and sport sciences	47,515	48,520	96,345
	Business and management	181,330	215,565	397,575
	Combined and general studies	24,530	14,355	39,025
	Computing	28,430	107,310	136,640
	Design, and creative and performing arts	105,550	57,625	165,195
	Education and	50,510	9,775	60,565

teaching

Engineering and technology	26,570	112,075	139,010
Geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences)	13,160	11,920	25,165
Geography, earth and environmental studies (social sciences)	4,685	3,770	8,475
Historical, philosophical and religious studies	33,820	25,820	60,045
Language and area studies	46,245	16,505	63,330
Law	67,160	35,325	102,720
Mathematical sciences	11,880	21,915	33,905
Media, journalism and communications	19,500	14,705	34,440
Medicine and dentistry	39,875	22,850	62,805
Physical sciences	23,065	27,255	50,540
Psychology	83,810	18,425	102,585
Social sciences	146,730	71,355	218,695

	Subjects allied to medicine	212,710	51,770	264,930
	Veterinary sciences	9,065	1,605	10,685
	Total	1,202,775	928,935	2,144,475
Total Postgraduate	Agriculture, food and related studies	3,005	1,920	4,940
	Architecture, building and planning	9,310	11,575	20,945
	Biological and sport sciences	12,325	9,255	21,680
	Business and management	103,560	110,870	214,850
	Combined and general studies	5,000	3,140	8,195
	Computing	20,790	39,790	60,810
	Design, and creative and performing arts	19,995	9,605	29,935
	Education and teaching	47,635	18,250	66,500
	Engineering and technology	13,595	36,305	50,110
	Geography, earth and environmental	4,630	3,690	8,375

studies (natural sciences)

Geography, earth and environmental studies (social sciences)	2,115	1,630	3,760
Historical, philosophical and religious studies	9,500	7,650	17,305
Language and area studies	11,880	4,815	16,905
Law	25,965	16,675	43,025
Mathematical sciences	4,115	6,980	11,150
Media, journalism and communications	9,630	4,500	14,225
Medicine and dentistry	14,600	7,810	22,500
Physical sciences	6,610	8,105	14,805
Psychology	30,705	6,970	37,890
Social sciences	46,065	23,565	70,030
Subjects allied to medicine	81,495	24,545	106,300
Veterinary sciences	1,745	520	2,280
Total	484,270	358,195	846,625

Total	Agriculture, food and related studies	13,180	7,220	20,470
	Architecture, building and planning	25,780	42,190	68,090
	Biological and sport sciences	59,845	57,775	118,020
	Business and management	284,890	326,430	612,425
	Combined and general studies	29,530	17,495	47,215
	Computing	49,220	147,100	197,450
	Design, and creative and performing arts	125,545	67,225	195,125
	Education and teaching	98,140	28,025	127,060
	Engineering and technology	40,165	148,380	189,120
	Geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences)	17,790	15,610	33,540
	Geography, earth and environmental studies (social sciences)	6,795	5,395	12,235

Historical, philosophical and religious studies	43,320	33,470	77,350
Language and area studies	58,120	21,320	80,235
Law	93,130	52,000	145,745
Mathematical sciences	15,990	28,890	45,055
Media, journalism and communications	29,130	19,205	48,665
Medicine and dentistry	54,470	30,660	85,310
Physical sciences	29,675	35,365	65,345
Psychology	114,520	25,390	140,475
Social sciences	192,795	94,920	288,725
Subjects allied to medicine	294,205	76,315	371,235
Veterinary sciences	10,815	2,120	12,965
Total	1,687,045	1,287,135	2,991,100

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. 2020/21 student numbers are not comparable to previous years due to a methodology change.
2. Totals includes those whose gender identity is other or unclassified.

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Source: Department for Education; Scottish Funding Council; Northern Ireland Department for the Economy

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Number of HE students by level of study, mode of study and sex, United Kingdom, 2023/24

		Female	Male	Total
Total Undergraduate	Full-time	1,013,535	798,615	1,820,290
	Part-time	189,240	130,320	324,185
	Total	1,202,775	928,935	2,144,475
Total Postgraduate	Full-time	310,105	264,685	577,155
	Part-time	174,165	93,510	269,470
	Total	484,270	358,195	846,625
Total	Full-time	1,323,640	1,063,300	2,397,445
	Part-time	363,405	223,830	593,655
	Total	1,687,045	1,287,135	2,991,100

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Footnotes

1. 2020/21 student numbers are not comparable to previous years due to a methodology change.
2. Totals includes those whose gender identity is other or unclassified.

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Source: Department for Education; Scottish Funding Council; Northern Ireland Department for the Economy

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In 2023/24, 24% of all HE students were from overseas (730,600 students). The number of overseas students as a proportion of total students was greater for postgraduate courses (51% of postgraduate students) than for undergraduate courses (14% of undergraduate students). Slightly more overseas students were female than male (51% share or 8,855 females more). As was the case in 2022/23, at postgraduate level there were more male overseas students than UK male students (66,745 more overseas male students to male UK students at postgraduate level).

Full-time overseas postgraduate students decreased by 5% (or 20,965) to 410,775 in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, marking the levelling off of a long-term upward trend, having previously increased from 197,220 in 2018/19.

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Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

 Hide

Data is used from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Labour Force Survey (LFS) to produce these NEET statistics. Since 2019, ONS have faced challenges around the falling number of responses to the LFS which has led to increased sampling variability. LFS datasets are weighted in line with population estimates. In recent years there have been several reweighting exercises to address changes in international migration and impacts as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Estimates in this section have been reweighted to 2019, therefore timeseries comparisons should be viewed with some caution, and this specific section should be considered 'Official Statistics in Development'.

The percentage of 16–24-year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in April to June 2025, in the UK, was estimated at 12.8%. This is a 0.3 percentage point increase compared to the previous quarter and 0.1 percentage points increase compared to April to June 2024. Note that these percentage point changes may differ from values presented in data tables due to rounding.

This is driven by an increase in the number of NEET females, whilst the number of NEET males has decreased. The NEET rate for females aged 16-24 increased by 1 percentage point from 11.4% in April-June 2024 to 12.4% in April-June 2025. The NEET rate for males in the same age group decreased by 0.7 percentage points across the same period, from 13.8% to 13.1%.

Of the estimated 947,500 16–24-year-olds who were NEET in April to June 2025, 497,400 (52%) were male and 450,100 (48%) were female. This compares to 514,900 (56%) males and 406,300 (44%) females in the same period in 2024.

In the period April to June 2025, the percentage of 16–17-year-olds and 18–24-year-olds who were NEET was estimated at 4.6% and 15.0% respectively.

Chart

Table

► Export options

Percentage of young people aged 16 to 24 years old not in education, employment or training (NEET) by sex, United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted, 2002 to 2025

Percentage of relevant population group

		Female	Male	Total
2002	Q1	15.3%	11.2%	13.3%
	Q2	15.5%	11.4%	13.4%
	Q3	15.3%	11.3%	13.3%
	Q4	15.0%	10.4%	12.7%
2003	Q1	15.7%	11.3%	13.5%

2003	Q1	15.7%	11.5%	13.5%
	Q2	16.2%	10.7%	13.4%
	Q3	15.6%	10.7%	13.1%
	Q4	14.9%	10.3%	12.6%
2004	Q1	14.5%	10.2%	12.4%
	Q2	15.5%	10.4%	12.9%
	Q3	16.0%	10.9%	13.4%
	Q4	15.5%	11.4%	13.4%
2005	Q1	15.7%	11.2%	13.4%
	Q2	15.9%	11.5%	13.7%
	Q3	15.2%	11.8%	13.5%
	Q4	16.1%	12.7%	14.4%
2006	Q1	16.0%	12.1%	14.1%
	Q2	16.0%	13.1%	14.6%
	Q3	16.4%	12.1%	14.3%
	Q4	15.7%	12.0%	13.8%
2007	Q1	16.0%	12.2%	14.1%
	Q2	15.9%	12.2%	14.1%
	Q3	15.9%	11.6%	13.7%
	Q4	15.6%	11.3%	13.4%
2008	Q1	15.6%	11.2%	13.4%
	Q2	16.0%	11.6%	13.8%

	Q3	16.1%	12.5%
2009	Q4	16.1%	12.2%
	Q1	16.5%	13.8%
	Q2	16.8%	14.3%
	Q3	16.9%	14.0%
2010	Q4	16.6%	13.2%
	Q1	17.1%	13.9%
	Q2	16.2%	13.2%
	Q3	17.1%	13.5%
2011	Q4	17.2%	14.5%
	Q1	16.3%	14.3%
	Q2	17.2%	14.4%
	Q3	18.0%	15.8%
2012	Q4	17.3%	15.7%
	Q1	17.1%	15.3%
	Q2	17.1%	15.3%
	Q3	16.1%	13.9%
2013	Q4	16.0%	13.6%
	Q1	16.5%	13.6%
	Q2	16.2%	13.6%
	Q3	16.0%	13.9%

	Q4	14.9%	13.6%	14.2%
2014	Q1	14.5%	12.4%	13.4%
	Q2	14.3%	12.2%	13.2%
	Q3	14.5%	12.1%	13.3%
	Q4	15.4%	11.4%	13.3%
2015	Q1	14.4%	11.4%	12.9%
	Q2	13.9%	11.4%	12.7%
	Q3	12.9%	10.7%	11.8%
	Q4	13.0%	10.8%	11.9%
2016	Q1	13.0%	11.1%	12.0%
	Q2	12.3%	11.2%	11.7%
	Q3	12.2%	11.8%	12.0%
	Q4	11.6%	11.5%	11.5%
2017	Q1	11.5%	10.8%	11.2%
	Q2	11.6%	10.7%	11.2%
	Q3	10.8%	11.7%	11.3%
	Q4	11.1%	11.4%	11.3%
2018	Q1	11.6%	11.1%	11.4%
	Q2	11.4%	10.9%	11.1%
	Q3	12.0%	9.7%	10.9%
	Q4	12.2%	10.5%	11.3%

2019	Q1	11.5%	10.9%	11.2%
	Q2	11.3%	11.8%	11.5%
	Q3	11.1%	12.0%	11.5%
	Q4	10.8%	10.7%	10.7%
2020	Q1	11.4%	11.6%	11.5%
	Q2	11.5%	11.8%	11.6%
	Q3	10.4%	12.0%	11.2%
	Q4	10.3%	13.1%	11.7%
2021	Q1	9.7%	11.8%	10.7%
	Q2	9.3%	10.0%	9.7%
	Q3	10.0%	10.5%	10.3%
	Q4	9.1%	11.5%	10.3%
2022	Q1	9.7%	11.5%	10.6%
	Q2	10.0%	11.0%	10.5%
	Q3	10.3%	10.7%	10.5%
	Q4	11.5%	12.0%	11.7%
2023	Q1	11.6%	11.5%	11.6%
	Q2	11.5%	11.9%	11.7%
	Q3	11.6%	12.4%	12.0%
	Q4	10.8%	13.2%	12.0%
2024	Q1	11.4%	14.3%	12.9%

	Q2	11.4%	13.8%	12.6%
	Q3	11.3%	14.7%	13.0%
	Q4	12.2%	14.2%	13.2%
2025	Q1	11.7%	13.2%	12.5%
	Q2	12.4%	13.1%	12.8%

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Since 2019, ONS have faced challenges around the falling number of responses to the LFS which has led to increased sampling variability. LFS datasets are weighted in line with population estimates. In recent years there have been several reweighting exercises to address changes in international migration and impacts as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Timeseries comparisons should be viewed with some caution, and should be considered 'Official Statistics in Development'. Full details of the reweighting can be found here: [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators - Office for National Statistics \(opens in new tab\)](#)
2. Figures are revised each year and may differ to previous Education and Statistics releases.

Source: UK NEET data

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Qualification headline measures

 Hide

Qualifications headline measures for the 2023/24 academic year or summer 2024 exam season

Given the different qualifications systems and headline measures, it is not suitable to present a direct comparison of pupil performance across the UK.

In England, exams and assessments went ahead as normal in the 2023/24 academic year. In recognition of the disruption due to the pandemic, some support arrangements remained in place. This included the provision of formulae and equation sheets in some GCSEs, grading protection, a spaced-out exam timetable and help with GCSE modern foreign languages by removing the requirement for exams to test unfamiliar vocabulary. In other parts of the UK, different adjustments to the assessment and grading processes were taken in the 2024 summer exams. As a result, the data that has been published for all parts of the UK should not be directly compared to attainment data from previous years for the purposes of measuring change in student performance.

Detail on changes to previous cycles of exams across each part of the UK is available in the [2024 Education and Training Statistics](#).

Published qualifications data can be found at the relevant sources for each part of the UK and each level of education:

England

[Key stage 4 performance 2024 \(revised\) - GOV.UK \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[A level and other 16 to 18 results, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Scotland

[Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 7: 2025 edition - gov.scot \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[Attainment Statistics - SQA \(opens in a new tab\) \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Wales

[Examination results: September 2023 to August 2024 | GOV.WALES \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[Sta/Medr/11/2025: Consistent performance measures for post-16 learning: Achievement, August 2023 to July 2024 - Medr \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[Sta/Medr/07/2025: Learner outcome measures for apprenticeships, August 2023 to July 2024 - Medr \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Northern Ireland

[Year 12 and Year 14 Examination Performance at Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2023/24 | Department of Education \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[School Leavers 2023/24 | Department of Education \(opens in new tab\)](#)

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Highest qualification for adults aged 19-64

 Hide

Data used to produce these highest qualification statistics is from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Labour Force Survey (LFS). Since 2019, ONS have faced challenges around the falling number of responses to the LFS which has led to increased sampling variability. LFS datasets are weighted in line with population estimates. In recent years there have been several reweighting exercises to address changes in international migration and

impacts as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The weighting applied to each estimate in this section is that available at the time of first release, therefore timeseries comparisons should be viewed with some caution, and this specific section should be considered 'Official Statistics in Development'. Please note that these statistics are rounded to 0 decimal places.

Across the UK, an estimated 84% of adults aged 19-64 have a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2 (e.g. GCSE grade 9-4/A*-C, National 5 grade A-C) or above. This decreases to an estimated 68% with NQF level 3 (e.g. A Levels, T Levels, Highers) or above and an estimated 50% at level 4 (e.g. higher apprenticeship) or above (e.g. higher national diploma, degree apprenticeship, bachelor's, master's, doctorate). The percentage qualified to each level has been on a steady upward trend in recent years, rising from 81%, 62% and 42% in 2018 for level 2, level 3 and level 4 respectively.

A higher percentage of females than males are qualified to each of these levels.

The age group with the highest percentage qualified for both NQF Level 2 and NQF Level 3 is 25-29 year olds, and at NQF level 4 or above a higher percentage of both 25-29 and 30-39-year olds are qualified.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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Highest qualification held by adults aged 19-64 by sex, United Kingdom, Q4 2024

	Female	Male	Total
NQF Level 2 or above	85%	83%	84%
NQF Level 3 or above	70%	66%	68%
NQF Level 4 or above	52%	47%	50%

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels used in Scotland are not directly comparable to NQF levels used in England/Wales/Northern Ireland. Figures relating to levels 5, 6 and 7 have been provided as the closest match to NQF levels 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Figures for the UK have been calculated using the NQF levels assigned to Scottish qualifications in the Labour Force Survey.
2. Since 2019, ONS have faced challenges around the falling number of responses to the LFS which has led to increased sampling variability. LFS datasets are weighted in line with population estimates. In recent years there have been several reweighting exercises to address changes in international migration and impacts as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Timeseries comparisons should be viewed with some caution, and should be considered 'Official Statistics in Development'. Full details of the reweighting can be found here: [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators - Office for National Statistics \(opens in new tab\)](#)

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Labour Force Survey

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Highest qualification held by 19-64 year olds in each part of the United Kingdom, Q4 2024

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
NQF Level 2 or above	84%	z	81%	81%
NQF Level 3 or above	68%	z	63%	63%
NQF Level 4 or above	50%	z	45%	43%
SCQF Level 5 or above	z	83%	z	z
SCQF Level 6 or above	z	72%	z	z
SCQF Level 7 or above	z	55%	z	z

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Footnotes

1. Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels used in Scotland are not directly comparable to NQF levels used in England/Wales/Northern Ireland. Figures relating to levels 5, 6 and 7 have been provided as the closest match to NQF levels 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Figures for the UK have been calculated using the NQF levels assigned to Scottish qualifications in the Labour Force Survey.
2. 'z' indicates data is not applicable.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: Labour Force Survey

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Education expenditure

 Hide

Education expenditure in the United Kingdom for the 2024-25 [Financial Year](#)

Total UK government expenditure on education across the UK increased by 3.8% from financial year 2023-24 to financial year 2024-25. In that period, secondary education saw an 8.5% increase in spend, while primary education spend decreased slightly by 0.2%. Tertiary education spend decreased by 37% compared to 2023-24, however, tertiary education expenditure in 2023-24 was affected by changes to fair value movement analysis of Student Loans. This has the effect of inflating capital expenditure, and makes it less comparable to previous years. When assessing spend against the more comparable figure for 2022-23, tertiary expenditure spend in 2024-25 decreased by 1.1%.

► Export options

Total expenditure (£ millions) on primary, secondary, tertiary and total education services in the United Kingdom, between FY 2016-17 and FY 2024-25

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Under fives	£3,125m	£3,544m	£3,926m	£4,236m	£4,653m
Primary education	£27,920m	£27,090m	£26,640m	£26,958m	£27,362m
Secondary education	£38,928m	£40,971m	£43,078m	£45,050m	£47,512m
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	£594m	£581m	£485m	£529m	£571m
Tertiary education	£6,066m	£5,419m	£4,621m	£4,372m	£4,898m
Research & Development education	£1,703m	£1,815m	£2,259m	£2,324m	£2,692m
Subsidiary services to education	£3,393m	£3,385m	£3,646m	£4,074m	£4,643m
Education not elsewhere covered	£2,369m	£2,344m	£2,687m	£2,107m	£2,077m
Total	£84,098m	£85,149m	£87,341m	£89,650m	£94,408m

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. In England, secondary education includes expenditure on central government academies which will also cover some schools in primary education.
2. Totals exclude expenditure for education not definable by level.

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Source: HM Treasury - Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA)

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Expenditure on education in real terms decreased by 0.3% from financial year 2023-24 to financial year 2024-25. Expenditure on education as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was stable at 4.1%.

► Export options

Expenditure on total education services (£ millions and % of GDP) in the United Kingdom, between FY 2016-17 and FY 2024-25

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-
Total expenditure (millions)	£84,098m	£85,149m	£87,341m	£89,650m	£94,408m
Total expenditure in real terms (millions)	£110,319m	£109,968m	£110,474m	£110,769m	£110,701m
Total expenditure as a percentage of GDP	4.2%	4.1%	4.0%	4.0%	4.5%

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals exclude expenditure for education not definable by level.
2. Figures are revised each year and may differ to previous Education and Statistics releases.

Source: HM Treasury - Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA); Office for National Statistics

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