

Summary of equality and diversity experimental data

April 2020

Background

1. This data release contains equality and diversity data for UK-domiciled entrants at English higher education providers. The data source was the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record.¹
2. The data reports the proportions and numbers of students in higher education by gender identity, parental education, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Additionally the data is provided by various levels of higher education study. This data is reported for a subset of higher education provision that is defined by the data availability for these fields. This data is updated annually and constitutes experimental statistics.
3. This information is published as part of a broader approach to equality and diversity, which includes Office for Students policies and action plans.²

Population and methodology

4. This release includes students in higher education in the academic years 2015-16 to 2018-19. The student numbers are available for UK-domiciled entrants (first year of study) only.
5. The equality and diversity characteristics included in this experimental data are reported for students attending providers that return data to the HESA student return. To be included, the data from providers has to be returned for a sufficient number of students and be of sufficient quality. The methodology document associated with this release gives details of how data was limited as well as additional methodology and population information.³

Findings

6. Information in addition to these highlighted findings can be found in the interactive charts and tables associated with this release.⁴ Note, this release only applies to UK-domiciled entrants.

¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18051>

² For further details see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/

³ Available from www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/experimental-data/

⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/experimental-data/

Undergraduate entrants

Gender identity

7. In 2018-19, less than 1 per cent of undergraduate entrants had a gender different from assigned at birth (0.8 per cent). 3.1 per cent of undergraduate entrants chose not to share their gender identity.
8. The data quality for 2015-16 was low and the values for 2016-17 onwards are thought to be more representative of the population.

Parental education

9. The proportion of undergraduate entrants who have a parent with a higher education qualification has remained broadly unchanged over the period, rising 1.1 percentage points since 2015-16 to 43 per cent in 2018-19.
10. In 2018-19, the proportion of students who had a parent with a higher education qualification was higher amongst full-time students (45.1 per cent) compared to part-time students (31.5 per cent).

Religion or belief

11. In the academic year 2018-19, for UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants, the most common religion or belief response was no religion (45.2 per cent) followed by Christianity (30.1 per cent), Muslim (10 per cent) and prefer not to say (8.2 per cent).

Sexual orientation

12. In 2018-19 the majority of students identified as heterosexual (84.8 per cent of UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants). The proportion identifying as bisexual, gay man or gay woman/lesbian stood at 6.1 per cent. 8.4 per cent chose not to report their sexual orientation.

Postgraduate entrants

Gender identity

13. In 2018-19, less than 1 per cent of postgraduate entrants had a gender different from assigned at birth (0.9 per cent). 4.2 per cent chose not to share their gender identity.

Parental education

14. There is little difference between the proportions of postgraduate entrants who have or do not have a parent with a higher education qualification (40.5 per cent and 41 per cent respectively in 2018-19).
15. For full-time postgraduate entrants in 2018-19, a larger proportion had a parent with a higher education qualification (42.1 per cent) than those who did not (40.5 per cent). Whereas, for part-time postgraduate entrants the opposite is true; more students have parents who do not have a higher education qualification than do (41.6 per cent and 38.3 per cent respectively).

Religion or belief

16. No religion was the most common response for postgraduate entrants (42.6 per cent in 2018-19) followed by Christian (31.7 per cent), information refused (12.4 per cent) and Muslim (6.7 per cent).

Sexual orientation

17. Like undergraduate entrants, the proportion of students identifying as bisexual, gay man or gay woman/lesbian has been increasing slowly and in 2018-19, 6.3 per cent of undergraduate entrants identified as one of these sexual orientations.

Contact

18. If you have any questions or feedback on these pages, please contact Stanley Rudkin at official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk.