

How student outcomes have changed since 2010-11

Student characteristics data: Student outcomes

Key findings for students at English higher education providers between 2010-11 and 2022-23

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Key findings

This report summarises some of the sector-level trends in the Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard.¹

Some of the key findings in the data dashboard include:

- Overall, full-time continuation has either remained steady or decreased across the time period for all the characteristics in this report. The most recent data confirms that in 2021-22 there has been a continued decline for all characteristics, but the rate of decline has varied. For progression, there is also a decline in 2021-22 for each of the characteristics.
- Young entrants have higher continuation rates than mature entrants. The differences in continuation rates between young and mature entrants have shown a steady increase since 2014-15, although this difference has narrowed in the last year. In 2021-22 the difference in continuation rate was 8.7 percentage points, down from 9.1 in 2020-21.
- Female entrants have higher continuation, completion and attainment rates than male entrants, with the difference in the rate of continuation increasing year-on-year. For entrants in 2021-22 the difference was 4.7 percentage points, up from 4.4 in 2020-21.
- Historically, entrants with no reported disability have maintained slightly higher continuation
 rates than entrants with a reported disability, however this trend has reversed in the last two
 years. In 2021-22, entrants with a reported disability had a slightly higher continuation rate
 of 87.6 per cent compared with entrants with no reported disability, who had a rate of 87.2
 per cent. This difference increased by 0.2 percentage points from 2020-21.
- Qualifiers from black ethnic groups have consistently had lower attainment rates than
 qualifiers of other ethnicities. Across the time series, the difference between attainment of
 black students and the ethnic group with the next lowest attainment rate has increased from
 10.0 to 11.4 percentage points. This difference increased from 8.6 percentage points to
 11.4 in 2022-23. White students have consistently had the highest attainment rates,
 although this has narrowed to 3.6 percentage points above students from mixed ethnic
 groups in 2022-23.
- Entrants considered 'significantly disadvantaged consistently have the lowest rates for all outcomes measures when compared to those considered 'economically precarious' and other entrants.² For continuation, the rate for significantly disadvantaged entrants is 84.6 per cent in 2021-22, 5.1 percentage points lower than economically precarious entrants and 6.9 percentage points lower than other entrants. This difference has increased from 4.3 and 6.1 percentage points respectively in 2018-19.

² See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/how-we-are-run/key-performance-measures/kpm-5-access-to-higher-education/.</u>

¹ See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-characteristics-data/outcomes-data-dashboard/.</u>

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Introduction

- 1. The Office for Students (OfS) measures student outcomes in four ways. This involves assessing the extent to which students continue and complete their studies, how well they do in those studies, and the type of work they do after they have qualified.
- Our student characteristics outcomes interactive data dashboard shows sector-level
 continuation, attainment, completion and progression rates for students by domicile, level of
 study, mode of study and various student characteristics. We define the four different outcomes
 measures as follows.

Student outcomes measures

- 1. Continuation the proportion of entrants who were continuing in the study of a higher education qualification.
- 2. Completion the proportion of entrants who gained a higher education qualification.
- 3. Attainment the proportion of undergraduate qualifiers who achieved a first or uppersecond for their first degree.
- 4. Progression the proportion of qualifiers who were in managerial or professional employment, further study, or had other positive outcomes at the time of responding to the Graduate Outcomes Survey.
- 3. Our student characteristics webpages also include associated datafiles and a technical document, providing full definitions of each of the student characteristics together with the methodology we have used to construct the statistics.³
- 4. The definitions of continuation, completion and progression measures used throughout this publication are consistent with those used by the OfS for other purposes.⁴ For example, in the:
 - regulation of student outcomes and access and participation
 - Teaching Excellence Framework.

If you have any queries, please contact official.statistics@officeforstudents.org.uk.

³ See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-characteristics-data/outcomes-data-dashboard/.</u>

⁴ These definitions can be found in the 'Description and definition of student outcome and experience measures' document, available at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/description-and-definition-of-student-outcome-and-experience-measures/.

What is in the data dashboard?

Student characteristics

5. The Student characteristics outcomes data dashboard includes multiple student characteristics. The characteristics marked with an asterisk (*) relate to one of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.⁵

Age (broad and detailed)* **Adult HE quintile** Associations between characteristics of students (ABCS) quintiles – access, continuation, completion and progression Care experience Disability (broad and type) * **Estrangement** Ethnicity (5 groups and 15 groups)* Free school meals eligibility **Gender identity** Geography of employment quintiles **Household Residual Income (HRI) Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)** Individual disadvantage **Parental higher education** Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) Religion or belief* Service child

⁵ For further information on the protected characteristics, see <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/what-does-the-law-say/</u>.

Sex*

Sexual orientation*

Socioeconomic background

Study location

Subcontracted students

Subject of study (broad)

Tracking underrepresentation by area (TUNDRA) MSOA

- 6. This report looks at the outcomes for students by age, sex, ethnicity and disability as these characteristics are both protected characteristics and are used in our core regulatory work.
- 7. This report also looks at the outcomes for students with differing levels of individual disadvantage, which is a new addition to the student characteristics data dashboard this year. We have included this as a separate section.
- 8. Please visit the dashboard on the OfS website to explore the outcomes for the other student characteristics not covered in this report.⁶

Findings in this report are for full-time first degree students who are either taught or registered by an OfS-registered provider. This population is chosen as the largest number of students fall into this category. Other populations are available in the dashboard.

In the report we focus on differences in outcomes in the most recent year of data for each outcome measure. The most recent years of data are:

continuation: 2021-22 entrants

completion: 2018-19 entrants

attainment: 2022-23 qualifiers

progression: 2021-22 qualifiers.

⁶ See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-characteristics-data/outcomes-data-dashboard/.</u>

Changes from last year

- 9. We have made a few updates to the student characteristics outcomes data since the previous publication of the dashboards in 2023:
 - Removal of the two-way ethnicity split comparing white students with a combined group of all other ethnic groups. This was changed as a result of responses to the consultation on constructing student outcome and experience indicators for use in OfS regulation.⁷
 - Addition of three new student characteristics:
 - Broad subject of study
 - Measure of individual disadvantage
 - Student subcontractual (franchised) arrangement.
- 10. The technical document provides further information about these new student characteristics.8

Impact of the coronavirus pandemic

- 11. The sector-level trends reported in the dashboards and key findings include data up to the 2022-23 academic year. Changes in these statistics may be influenced by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, particularly given that the UK entered three national lockdowns throughout the period March 2020 to July 2021.⁹ For example:
 - Any changes to the structure of learning and assessment during this time could have affected students' decisions. It may have had an impact on whether and how they might choose to register on higher education courses, and on whether students continued with their studies.
 - Many OfS-registered providers introduced a 'no detriment' policy in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years. This typically ensured no student would be awarded a final grade lower than the most recent provider assessment of their attainment.¹⁰ This may have affected attainment rates in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years.
 - The pandemic could have also affected rates across all of the life cycle stages in these years. For example, because of economic effects, changes to the assessment system and changes in learning methods prior to going to university or college during the pandemic.
- 12. However, users should not automatically interpret changes seen in the data since 2019-20 as having been caused by the pandemic. Other causal factors, such as provider actions or the

⁷ For more information, see <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/6616/ofs_consultation-on-constructing-student-outcome-and-experience-indicators.pdf.</u>

⁸ Available alongside this document at <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-characteristics-data-2010-11-to-2022-23/</u>.

⁹ For more information, see https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/timeline-coronavirus-lockdown-december-2021.pdf.

¹⁰ See https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/25-01-2022/sb262-higher-education-student-statistics/qualifications.

individual motivations or experiences of a student, may also have contributed to these changes.

13. The impact of these changes will need to be considered when making comparisons across pandemic-affected years.

Continuation

The proportion of entrants who were continuing in the study of a higher education qualification.

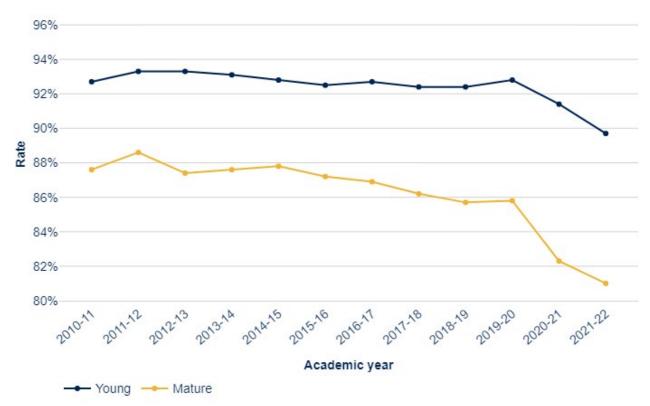


Figure 1: Continuation rates split by age on entry from 2010-11 to 2021-22

- 14. Young (under 21 years of age on entry) students have higher continuation rates than mature students. The differences in continuation rates between young and mature students show a steady increase over the last five years, though with a slight decrease in the last year. In 2021-22 the difference in continuation rates was 8.7 percentage points. For the previous year of entrants, this was 9.1 percentage points.
- 15. Overall, since 2020-11 continuation rates for young entrants were relatively consistent until 2019-20 and have since begun to decrease. For mature students there has been more of a decrease year-on-year, with this being more pronounced since 2019-20. There is a 1.7 percentage point change from 2020-21 to 2021-22 for young entrants and a 1.3 percentage point change for mature entrants.

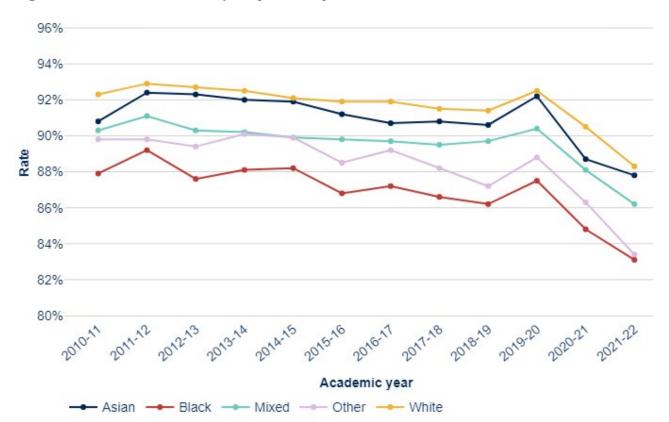
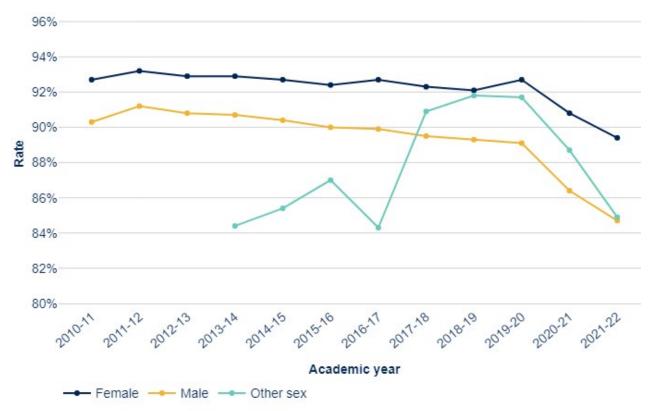


Figure 2: Continuation rates split by ethnicity from 2010-11 to 2021-22

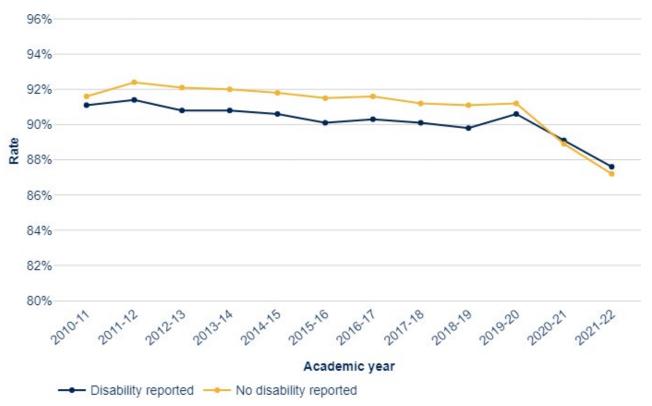
- 16. In 2021-22 the continuation rate for entrants from black ethnic groups was 5.2 percentage points lower than that for entrants from white ethnic groups, compared to 5.7 percentage points in 2020-21.
- 17. For all ethnicities, the continuation rate in 2021-22 is the lowest across the entire time series. The continuation rate for black entrants is consistently the lowest over the time series, with Asian entrants having a rate much closer to that of white entrants.
- 18. In 2021-22 there is the smallest difference between black entrants and entrants of other ethnicities. The difference between these groups is now only 0.3 percentage points.
- 19. Continuation rates for all entrants have been decreasing across the time series, particularly since 2019-20. Rates have been decreasing at a similar rate for all ethnicities, though in 2021-22 the rate for Asian entrants decreased less dramatically than for other ethnicities. The rate for Asian entrants from 2020-21 to 2021-22 decreased by only 0.9 percentage points.





- 20. Across the whole time series continuation rates have decreased for both male and female entrants, with rates for male entrants decreasing at a steeper rate than for female entrants. This trend continues with the 2021-22 data.
- 21. In 2021-22 the continuation rate for female entrants was 4.7 percentage points higher than that for male entrants, a difference that has grown from 2.8 percentage points for 2018-19 entrants.
- 22. This chart shows continuation rates for other sex entrants, though the number of entrants in this category is small. This can cause larger year-on-year variations in rates. 'Other sex' is defined as a student who is not recorded as male or female in the data.





- 23. Over the last two years there has been a change in trend with entrants with a reported disability now having the highest continuation rate (compared with entrants with no reported disability).
- 24. In 2021-22 the continuation rate for entrants with no reported disability was 0.3 percentage points lower than for entrants with a reported disability. This is a shift from the rate being 0.6 percentage points higher for entrants with no reported disability in 2019-20.

Completion

The proportion of entrants who gained a higher education qualification.



Figure 5: Completion rates split by age on entry from 2010-11 to 2018-19

- 25. Across the entire time series completion rates for young students have remained higher than for mature students. Rates have also remained within two percentage points for young students with only a slight decline since 2012-13. In 2018-19 the completion rate was 90.5 percentage points, up from 90.3 percentage points in 2017-18.
- 26. Completion rates of mature entrants in 2018-19 were 8.8 percentage points lower than for young entrants. This continues the trend of rates for mature entrants being lower, and also continues the widening trend, increasing from 7.2 percentage points in 2016-17.

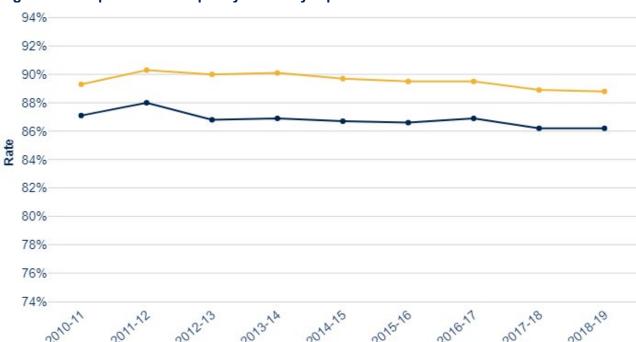


Figure 6: Completion rates split by disability reported from 2010-11 to 2018-19

27. Throughout the time series, the completion rates for students with no reported disability have remained consistently higher than for students with a reported disability. This trend has continued in the most recent data.

Disability reported — No disability reported

Academic year

28. In 2018-19, the completion rates of entrants with a disability reported was 2.6 percentage points lower than entrants with no reported disability. This is down 0.1 percentage points from the previous year due to a drop in rates for students with no reported disability. In 2016-17, the difference was the same as in 2018-19 but the overall rate has come down for both groups.



Figure 7: Completion rates split by sex from 2010-11 to 2018-19

- 29. In 2018-19 the completion rate for female entrants was 5.2 percentage points higher than for male entrants, a difference that has shrunk from 5.7 percentage points for 2017-18 and 5.3 percentage points in 2016-17.
- 30. Overall, the completion rate for female entrants has consistently remained higher than that for male entrants across the whole time series.
- 31. This chart shows rates for other sex entrants, though the number of entrants in this category is small. This can cause larger year-on-year variations in rates. 'Other sex' is defined as a student who is not recorded as male or female in the data.



Figure 8: Completion rates split by ethnicity from 2010-11 to 2018-19

- 32. In 2018-19 the completion rate for entrants from black ethnic groups was 7.3 percentage points lower than for entrants from white ethnic groups. This difference has increased from 6.9 percentage points in 2016-17.
- 33. Across all ethnicities the difference in completion rates has widened. The rates for all ethnicities has also decreased, though for entrants from Asian ethnic groups this remains similar to the rate in 2010-11.

Attainment

Young — Mature

The proportion of undergraduate qualifiers who achieved a first or upper-second for their first degree.

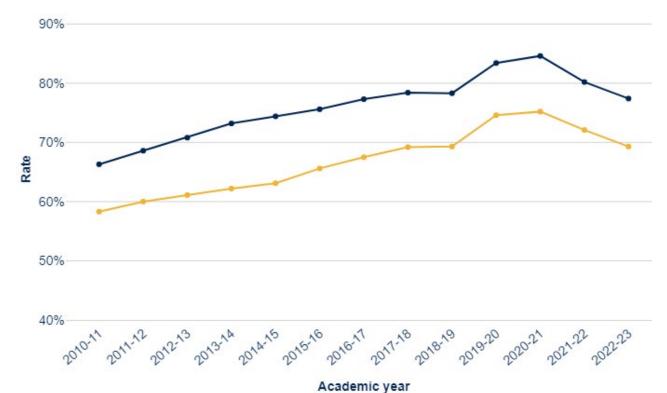
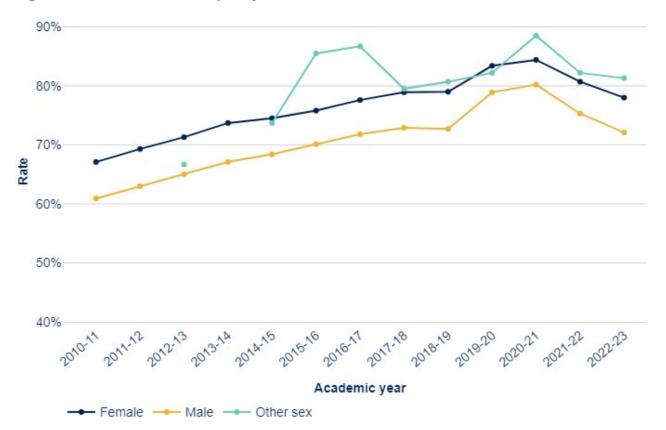


Figure 9: Attainment rates split by age on entry from 2010-11 to 2022-23

- 34. In 2022-23, young qualifiers had attainment rates 8.1 percentage points higher than mature qualifiers. This trend of young students having higher attainment rates is consistent throughout the entire time series, though there has been a narrowing of the difference when compared to earlier in the time series.
- 35. The attainment rates in 2022-23 have come down from a peak in 2020-21 to be more in line with their pre-pandemic values in 2018-19.





- 36. In 2021-22, the attainment rate for male qualifiers was 5.9 percentage points lower than for female qualifiers. This is in line with the ongoing trend of female qualifiers having higher attainment rates. Overall, the attainment rates for both male and female qualifiers has returned to values similar to 2018-19 after a peak in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The rate is now 78 percentage points for female qualifiers and 72.1 percentage points for male qualifiers, compared to 79.0 and 72.7 respectively in 2018-19.
- 37. This chart shows rates for other sex qualifiers, though the number of qualifiers in this category is small. This can cause larger year-on-year variations in rates. Additionally, the data is not available in some years. 'Other sex' is defined as a student who is not recorded as male or female in the data.

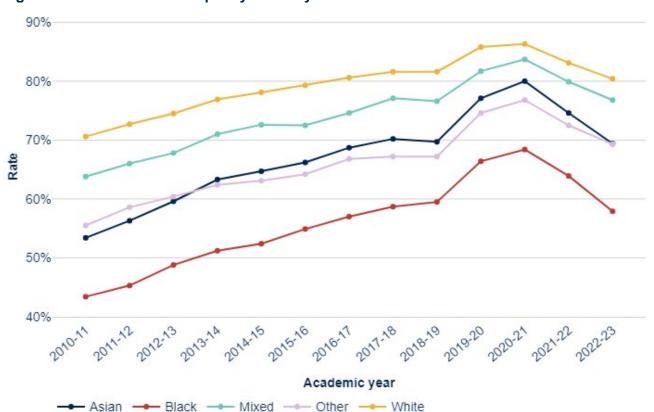
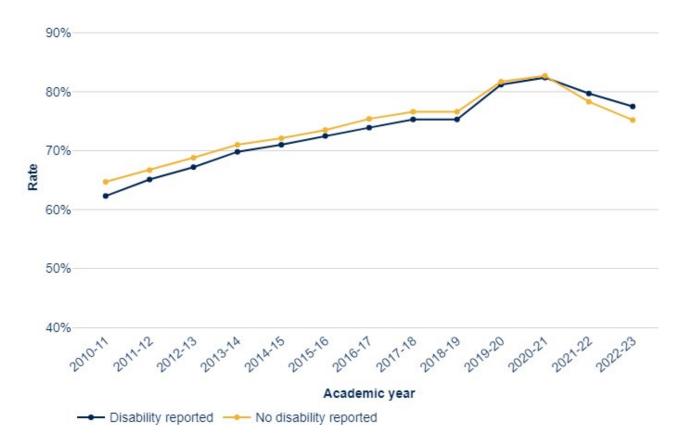


Figure 11: Attainment rates split by ethnicity from 2010-11 to 2022-23

- 38. In 2022-23, the attainment rate qualifiers from black ethnic groups was 22.5 percentage points lower than for qualifiers from white ethnic groups. This difference has increased from 17.9 percentage points in 2020-21. Qualifiers from black ethnic groups have consistently had lower attainment rates than qualifiers of other ethnicities. Across the time series, the difference between qualifiers from black ethnic groups and the ethnicity with the next lowest rate has increased from 10 to 11.4 percentage points. This difference further increased from 8.6 percentage points in 2021-22 to 11.4 in 2022-23.
- 39. The attainment rate for qualifiers from white ethnic groups has remained the highest, with the difference between qualifiers from white and from mixed ethnic groups being 3.6 percentage points in 2022-23. This is a slight reduction from five percentage points in 2018-19.
- 40. Over the whole time series there is a general increase in rates, though this is less pronounced for qualifiers from white ethnic groups. There was a noticeable increase in 2019-20 across all ethnicities, and since 2020-21 there has been a gradual decrease.





- 41. In 2022-23, the attainment rate for qualifiers with no reported disability was 2.3 percentage points lower than for qualifiers with a reported disability. This difference has increased from 1.4 percentage points in 2021-22.
- 42. Overall, there has been a change in which group has the highest attainment rate in the last two years, with qualifiers with a reported disability now having the highest rate. Additionally, the rate for qualifiers with no reported disability has returned to a level below the rate in 2018-19, whereas the rate for qualifiers with a reported disability remains 2.2 percentage points higher.

Progression

The proportion of qualifiers who reported a positive outcome in their responses to the Graduate Outcomes Survey.

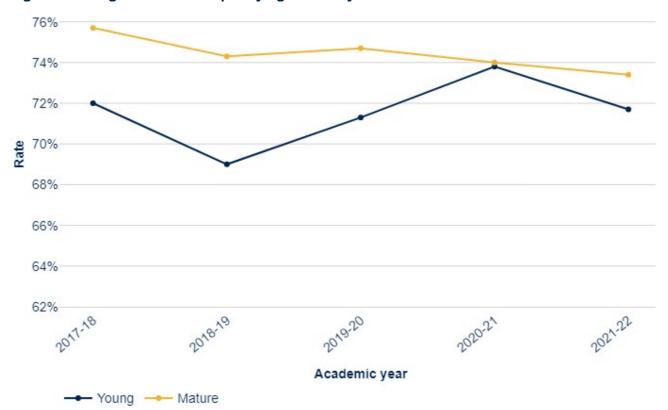


Figure 13: Progression rates split by age on entry from 2017-18 to 2021-22

- 43. In 2021-22, the progression rate for young qualifiers was 1.7 percentage points lower than that for mature qualifiers. There is some fluctuation in the rates for young qualifiers but it has remained lower than for mature qualifiers across the time series.
- 44. Over the whole time series, the progression rate for mature qualifiers has dropped from 75.7 per cent in 2017-18 to 73.4 per cent in 2021-22. The rate for young qualifiers has decreased from 72.0 to 71.7 per cent in this time period. As a result, the difference between young and mature qualifiers has decreased from 3.7 percentage points in 2017-18 to 1.7 percentage points in 2021-22.



Figure 14: Progression rates split by sex from 2017-18 to 2021-22

- 45. In 2021-22, the progression rate for female qualifiers was 1.6 percentage points lower than for male qualifiers. Throughout the time series, the progression rate for female qualifiers has been consistently lower, and has remained roughly consistent in the last two years of data, with the difference being 1.4 percentage points in 2020-21.
- 46. This chart shows progression rates for other sex qualifiers, though the number of qualifiers in this category is small. This can cause larger year-on-year variations in rates. 'Other sex' is defined as a student who is not recorded as male or female in the data.

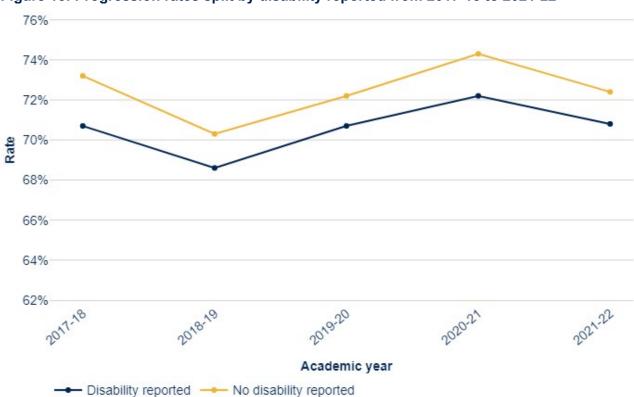


Figure 15: Progression rates split by disability reported from 2017-18 to 2021-22

47. In 2021-22, the progression rate for students with a reported disability was 1.6 percentage points lower than for students with no reported disability. This difference has decreased from 2.1 percentage points for 2020-21 qualifiers, though it is in line with the 2019-20 value of 1.5 percentage points. Unlike in continuation and attainment, there is a consistent difference between the two groups.

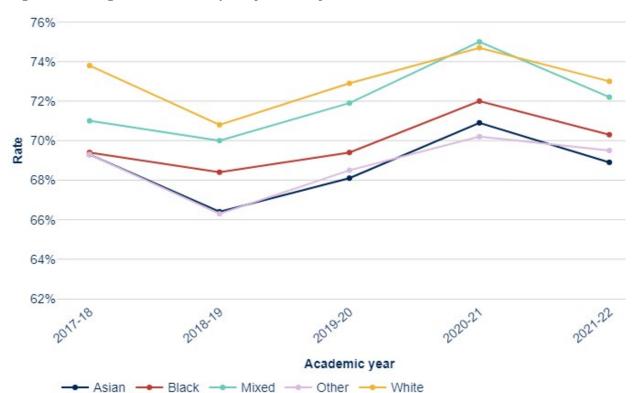


Figure 16: Progression rates split by ethnicity from 2017-18 to 2021-22

- 48. In 2021-22, the progression rate for qualifiers from Asian ethnic groups was 4.1 percentage points lower than for qualifiers from white ethnic groups. This difference has increased from 3.8 percentage points for 2020-21 qualifiers.
- 49. Throughout most of the time series, qualifiers from white ethnic groups had the highest progression rate, though in 2020-21 qualifiers from mixed ethnic groups had the highest progression rate. The ethnic group with the lowest progression rate has alternated between Asian and other qualifiers since 2017-18.

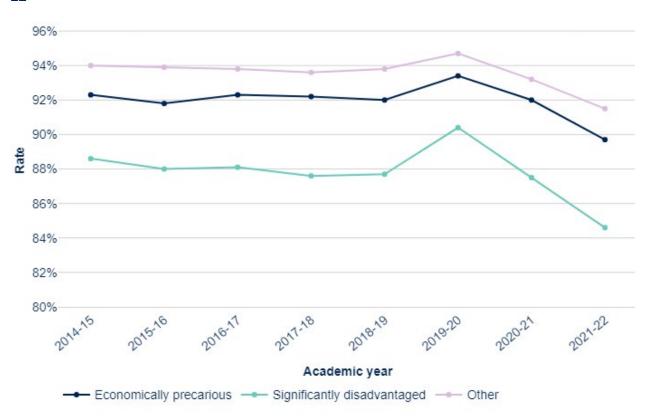
Individual disadvantage

Student outcomes by differing levels of individual disadvantage. 11

This measure uses multiple data sources to place students into one of three groups. The measure is based on individual level data from different stages of a student's education and shows those from economically precarious contexts who may face barriers to equality of opportunity, as well as those who are the most disadvantaged. The three groups are:

- Significantly disadvantaged students who are the most severely financially disadvantaged or have attended a special or alternative school.
- Economically precarious students from a financially disadvantaged background who are not captured by the 'Significantly disadvantaged' group.
- Other students those who do not fall into either of the disadvantage groups.

Figure 17: Continuation rates split by level of individual disadvantage from 2014-15 to 2021-22

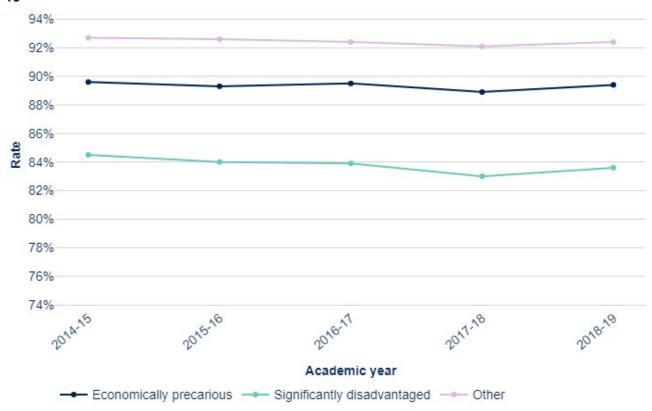


50. In 2021-22, the continuation rate for significantly disadvantaged students was 6.9 percentage points lower than for other students. This difference has been increasing since 2019-20 where it was 4.2 percentage points. Overall, since 2014-15 the continuation rate for all students has decreased. Significantly disadvantaged entrants consistently have the lowest rates when compared to economically precarious and other entrants.

¹¹ See <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/how-we-are-run/key-performance-measures/kpm-5-access-to-higher-education/ for more information on our measure of disadvantage.</u>

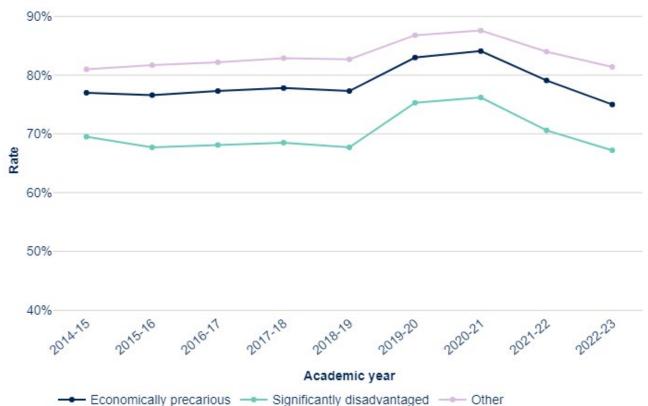
- 51. In 2021-22, the rate for significantly disadvantaged entrants was 84.6 per cent, 5.1 percentage points lower than for economically precarious entrants. This difference has increased from 4.3 percentage points in 2018-19.
- 52. Economically precarious students have continuation rates closer to other students than significantly disadvantaged students, but consistently lower. The difference between these students and significantly disadvantaged students has been increasing over the last few years, with 2019-20 being an outlier where the difference decreased.

Figure 18: Completion rates split by level of individual disadvantage from 2014-15 to 2018-19



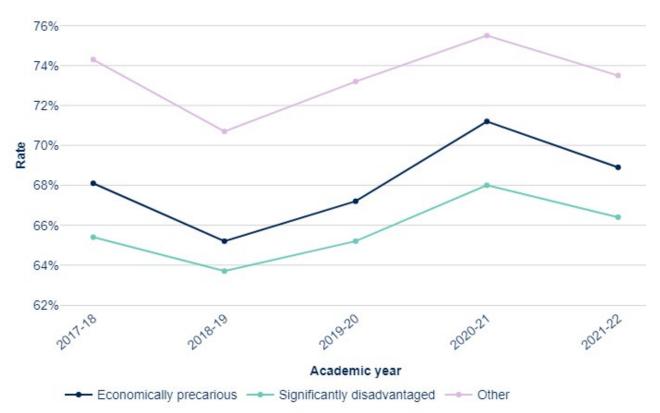
- 53. In 2018-19, the completion rate for significantly disadvantaged entrants was 8.9 percentage points lower than for other entrants. This continues the overall trend of significantly disadvantaged entrants having the lowest completion rates.
- 54. The trend for economically precarious entrants also continues, with the difference between economically precarious and other entrants being three percentage points. This difference has remained steady across the whole time series.





55. In 2022-23, the attainment rate for significantly disadvantaged qualifiers was 14.1 percentage points lower than for other qualifiers. There has been an overall decrease in attainment rates from a peak in 2020-21, with the rate for significantly disadvantaged qualifiers decreasing by 8.9 percentage points. This decrease brings it back in line with the rate in 2018-19 of 67.7 per cent. The trend here is also seen in economically precarious and other qualifiers, with rates for both groups decreasing to 2018-19 levels.





56. In 2021-22 the progression rate for significantly disadvantaged qualifiers was 7.1 percentage points lower than for other qualifiers. This continues the trend of significantly disadvantaged qualifiers having the lowest progression rates. Throughout the time series the difference in progression rates between economically precarious and other qualifiers has narrowed slightly. In 2021-22 this was 4.6 percentage points, narrowing from 6.2 percentage points in 2017-18.

Notes

- 57. This report and associated dashboard include unadjusted rates of continuation, completion, attainment and progression between different student groups.¹²
- 58. The report does not examine the relationship between different characteristics and students' outcomes after taking other factors into account.
- 59. Some of these characteristics included in this release apply to small populations. It is important to note that we have not performed significance or sensitivity analysis on the raw rates included here. Small differences in rates may not represent statistically significant differences in outcomes for students with those characteristics.
- 60. These findings relate only to the years covered by the data. They should not be assumed to reflect future performance.
- 61. Students have been excluded from the calculation of outcomes where information was not provided. If the data is not applicable or is otherwise unknown, this has also been excluded.

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¹² The student outcomes data dashboard can be viewed at <u>www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-characteristics-data/outcomes-data-dashboard/</u>.

