

Working Paper 2

THE SOCIAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLICANTS AND ENTRANTS TO FULL-TIME HE IN THE UK 1996-2010

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Introduction

This is the second Working Paper of the research project on *Changing Transitions to a Differentiated Higher Education System*, funded by the Nuffield Foundation. The project uses data from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to describe the social, demographic and educational characteristics of applicants and entrants to full-time undergraduate higher education (HE) in the UK since 1996, to analyse the changing nature of institutional differentiation, and to study differences across the four home countries of the UK and cross-border flows of applicants and entrants.

Further details of the project are provided in the first Working Paper¹, which describes applications and entry to HE through UCAS over the period, with particular reference to different types of institutions and programmes and to differences across the home countries. This paper continues its descriptive mapping of the data and presents information on the characteristics of applicants and entrants. It also provides preliminary answers to the project's first two research questions:

1. In what ways have the social, demographic and educational characteristics of applicants and entrants to full-time HE changed over the period 1996-2010? Are there different trends across the four home countries?

¹ Croxford, L. and Raffe, D. (2011) Applicants and entrants through UCAS to the UK's differentiated full-time HE system 1996-2010, CES, University of Edinburgh.

2. How successful are different types of applicants in gaining entry to at least one of their chosen higher education institutions? How have their success rates varied over the period 1996-2010 and across the four home countries?

Data

The project uses UCAS data on applications in 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010. The data are generated through an annual application process whose details have evolved over the period but whose main features are as follows. Each applicant makes up to five (formerly six) applications, and each application receives a conditional or unconditional offer or is rejected. The applicant may either accept one unconditional offer or a conditional offer plus a second-choice (conditional or unconditional) 'insurance' offer. When the applicant's qualifications are known, and the outcome of conditional acceptances is thus determined, applicants who have not met the conditions for the offers that they have accepted may enter a new clearing stage and compete for courses with unfilled places.

The following tables are based on three main constructs which need to be understood in relation to this process. They are:

- *applicants*: all applicants through UCAS to at least one HE institution, regardless of the number of applications they made;
- *entrants*: all applicants who were formally accepted by an HE institution to which they had applied through UCAS, and did not refuse the offer. Acceptances through clearing are included. The data do not tell us if all these acceptances were followed through to entry to, and continuation on, the course; nor do they cover people who made successful direct applications to institutions after the UCAS clearing process was completed. The data on entrants do not, therefore, correspond precisely to data from other sources such as HESA;
- *success rates*: the percentage of applicants, as defined above, who were also entrants. We call these 'success rates' on the grounds that entry to HE was the main purpose of the application and therefore the criterion of success. However, they reflect the iterative process of choice and acceptance described above, and cannot be equated with the success or failure of a single application.

The UCAS data cover nearly all applications to full-time undergraduate courses in HE institutions. They do not cover part-time or postgraduate courses, courses covered by separate admissions schemes (such as courses in music conservatoires) or those in the handful of HE institutions which were not members of UCAS. Unlike Working Paper 1, the tables presented here are restricted to UK-domiciled applicants to HE institutions (including non-university HE institutions). They exclude applicants from outside the UK (13% in 1996, rising to 16% in 2010), and they exclude the handful of UCAS applicants (about 2% in most years) who applied only to Further Education (FE) colleges or other non-HE institutions. Applicants who applied both to HE and to non-HE institutions but entered a non-HE institution are included as applicants but not counted as entrants. We excluded applications to FE colleges and other non-HE institutions in order to have a population which is relatively

easy to define. The vast majority of full-time undergraduate programmes offered in HE institutions recruit through UCAS, whereas only a fraction of such programmes in FE colleges do so, and this fraction has varied over time and across the four home countries. However, university-college collaborations provide a possible 'grey area' in defining our population. For example, we may include some applicants and entrants to programmes that are mainly delivered in FE colleges but which recruit through the collaborating HE institutions.

Because they cover only HE institutions the following analyses do not reflect changes in the characteristics of applicants and entrants associated with the expansion of HE in FE colleges. Since the 1997 Dearing Report there has been a policy to encourage growth in HE provision in the colleges (often in short-cycle and/or part-time courses) and to use these as a magnet for widening participation. This policy has been driven hardest in England although similar measures are found in the other home countries. The data presented below will therefore not record any widening of participation that results from more people in under-represented groups applying to, and entering, HE programmes in FE colleges.

The social, demographic and educational variables describing the characteristics of applicants and entrants will be discussed as they are introduced in the tables that follow.

Age

Table 1 shows the age composition of applicants and entrants, and the success rate among applicants in each age band, in each year of the study. Age is measured as at 30 September in the relevant application cycle. In each year a majority of applicants were young people, aged under-21; 18 year-olds, the modal group, accounted for nearly half of all applicants, although this proportion fell during the last two cohorts. The proportion of applicants aged 21 or over fell from 24% (10 + 14) in 1996 to 20% (9 + 11) in 2000. Thereafter it rose steadily to 2010 when it stood at 27%. However, success rates tended to decline with age, so people aged 21 or over formed a smaller proportion of entrants than of applicants (21% compared with 27% in 2010). Overall success rates rose between the first two cohorts, remained relatively stable between 2000 and 2008 and then fell sharply in 2010. Older applicants were particularly affected by this fall: barely more than half of applicants aged 25 or over succeeded in entering HE in 2010 (54%). The more competitive conditions of the 2010 applications round appear to have exacerbated age inequalities in success rates. We observe other examples of this apparent 'squeezing-out' of more marginal applicants in relation to other applicant characteristics, below.

Table 2 shows the age composition of applicants and entrants, and the success rate among applicants in each age band, in each home country in 2010. The age composition of applicants was similar in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, except for the smaller proportion of applicants in Northern Ireland aged 25 or over. In Scotland, where school year groups cover a different span of birthdates, the age distribution was more polarised. More applicants were aged 17 or under (18% compared with negligible proportions in the other countries) and more were aged 21 or over (32% in Scotland compared with 28% in Wales, 27% in England and 20% in Northern Ireland). Since the youngest and oldest applicants from

Scotland had higher success rates than those from elsewhere, this relative polarisation was even more pronounced among entrants than among applicants. However, apart from the tiny handful (outside Scotland) of 17 year-olds, success rates declined with age in all countries, although the decline was steepest in England.

Table 3 shows trends across the four home countries, based on a simple comparison of applicants under-21 with those aged 21 or over. Trends in the ages of applicants and entrants were similar across the four home countries. In each country the proportion of older applicants fell between 1996 and 2000 and rose again over the subsequent decade. Trends in success rates were broadly similar, although the recent decline in success rates among older applicants was most pronounced in England and least pronounced in Northern Ireland, where older applicants had higher success rates in 2010 than in 1996.

Gender

More than half of applicants were female and this proportion rose over the period, from 52% to 57% (Table 4). The proportion of entrants who were female was fractionally lower than the proportion of applicants, and it rose slightly less, reflecting higher success rates among males. The gender distribution of under-21 year old applicants and entrants broadly mirrored those of the entire cohort (Table 5). Trends in the gender composition of applicants and entrants were similar across the four home countries (Table 6), with the partial exception of Northern Ireland which had the highest proportions of female applicants and entrants at the beginning of the period and the lowest at the end of the period. All these differences, however, are relatively small. A female applicant's chances of gaining entry to HE varied across the four home countries and across the cohorts, and likewise for males, but the gender gap - with males having slightly higher success rates than females - remained broadly constant across the four countries and over time.

Ethnicity

The proportion of applicants who described their ethnic backgrounds as 'white' fell from 81% to 77% between 1996 and 2000 and remained relatively stable over the following decade (Table 7). The proportion of entrants who were white followed a similar trend. Asian Indians were the largest minority group at the beginning of the period, but they were overtaken by Black Africans who rose from 2% to 6% of applicants between 2000 and 2010. However, while the success rates of Asian Indians were consistently above average, those of Black Africans were consistently below average, and in most years they were lowest of all the ethnic groups identified in the UCAS data.

These figures need to be interpreted in the light of the fluctuating number of applicants who did not state their ethnicity. These are excluded from the 100% base in Tables 8, 9 and 10, which compare white and non-white (including 'mixed' and 'other') applicants. Table 8 confirms the rising proportion of non-whites among both applicants and entrants, and shows that non-whites as a group had consistently lower success rates than whites. The differentials were greatest among the first and last cohorts of the series, whose overall success rates were lowest; ethnic minorities, like older applicants, appear to have been

disproportionately affected by the stronger competition for places. Table 9 shows the same upward trend in non-white applicants and entrants aged under-21, although the percentages in each cohort are slightly lower, indicating that fewer under-21 than older applicants (or entrants) are non-white. Perhaps more surprisingly, white and non-white applicants aged under-21 have had almost identical success rates since 2004, indicating that the differences are to be found among older applicants. This may reflect compositional differences, if the ethnic minority groups with relatively high success rates are more likely to be found among younger applicants.

Table 10 reveals wide variations in the ethnic composition of applicants in the four countries. Non-whites accounted for nearly a quarter (24%) of applicants in England in 2010, compared with 7% in each of Wales and Scotland, and only 2% in Northern Ireland. These proportions had increased in all four countries, but the differences between them remained similar. In all countries except Northern Ireland whites had consistently higher success rates; however, as we have seen, success rates varied across different non-white ethnic groups, and the comparison takes no account of the varying composition of the non-white populations of the home countries.

Social class

Applicants were asked to state the occupation of the parent, step-parent or guardian 'who earns the most', or their own occupation if over 21, and their answers are used to identify their social class. It should be noted that the question is necessarily less detailed than those used in many social surveys of class inequalities, and researchers and UCAS itself warn against the limitations of the social-class data.

Trends and comparisons based on the social-class variable are complicated by three further factors. The first is the change in classification. In 1996 and 2000 the data were classified into the Registrar-General's classes. We have reduced these to four categories by combining Class IIIM (skilled manual) with classes IV and V (partly skilled and unskilled manual). The data for the later cohorts were coded using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC), which had been introduced at the time of the 2001 Census. We have re-aggregated the eight NS-SEC classes into four classes of similar size among higher education applicants, as follows:

SEC 1: Higher managerial and professional;

SEC 2: Lower managerial and professional;

SEC 3: Intermediate; small employers and own account workers;

SEC 4: Lower supervisory and technical; semi-routine; and routine.

We report class differences and trends in 1996-2000 and in 2004-2010 respectively, using a four-class schema in each case, but the two schemas are not equivalent and we are not able to make comparisons between these two periods.

The second complicating factor is the large but varying fraction of applicants whose data could not be coded into one of these categories, and who comprise the fifth ('unknown')

category in Table 11. This category expanded over the period of our study, reaching 20% of applicants in 2010. It tended to be larger under the revised (NS-SEC) classification than under the former Registrar-General's Social Classes.

The third complicating factor is the difference in the data collected from under-21s, who were asked to report their parents' occupations, and those aged 21 and over who were asked to report their own occupations. The tables presented below are based on applicants aged under-21.

Between 2004 and 2008 there was a very slight increase in the proportions both of applicants and of entrants from SEC 4 (Table 11), but these proportions fell again in 2010. Success rates were consistently correlated with social class. The gradient of success rates across social classes became steeper in the more competitive conditions of 2010: another example, it would appear, of the squeezing-out effect.

Northern Ireland, followed by Wales, had the largest proportion of applicants and entrants from less advantaged social backgrounds in 2010 (Table 12). This partly reflects the different social compositions of the populations at risk. The correlation between social class and success rates tended to be stronger in Northern Ireland and Scotland than in the other two countries.

Table 13 shows trends in the social class composition of applicants and entrants in the four home countries. To simplify interpretation, the table is restricted to those with a known social class and it combines the first two categories and the last two categories of each four-category schema. Throughout the period England and Scotland attracted the highest proportions of applicants and entrants from the two top classes, and Northern Ireland the lowest. There is a slight tendency for Scotland to overtake England as the country where most applicants and entrants came from the higher social classes. Throughout the period Scotland had the largest differential in success rates.

Disability

Tables 14 and 15 show the percentage of applicants and entrants who reported a disability. This total is based on a longer list of disabilities of which 'specific learning difficult' is the most frequently mentioned, accounting for around a half of all people who reported disabilities. This list has changed very slightly over the years; it is hard to tell whether the increase in 'disabled' applicants and entrants between 2000 and 2010 reflects these changes, an increased willingness to report disabilities, or a genuine increase in the proportions who are disabled. Candidates who reported a disability had very slightly lower success rates than other candidates, and this difference was stable over time. Table 14 covers applicants of all ages; among under-21s the proportions of applicants and entrants reporting a disability were almost identical (table not shown) although success rates were higher (75% and 76% respectively of those with and without reported disabilities in 2010). There were small differences across the home countries (Table 15). There was an apparent upsurge in disabled applicants in Scotland in 2008, which may be a reporting effect; the proportion of applicants reporting themselves as disabled was lower in Northern Ireland than elsewhere, and their relative success rate was also lower.

Previous educational sector

Table 16 shows the educational sector of the institution through which applications were made. It is restricted to applicants aged under-21, but even among this group about one in ten applicants did not apply through an institution, or could not be classified in terms of the main sectors. In 1996 and 2000 the data do not distinguish Grammar Schools from other state schools, and include Sixth Form Colleges within the category for Further and Higher Education.

The main trends are a decline in the proportions of applicants and entrants from independent schools and (at least since 2006) from FE/HE institutions, and an increase in the proportions from Sixth Form Colleges. Applicants from Grammar Schools and independent schools had consistently higher success rates, while those from FE/HE institutions had lower success rates than applicants from other sectors.

However, the institutions from which HE applicants came varied considerably across the four home countries, and the more interesting trends are observed within each country (Table 17). There was a very slight growth in the proportions of English-domiciled applicants and entrants from state schools, including Grammar Schools. However, even by 2010 state schools other than Grammar Schools - mainly comprehensive schools - accounted for barely more than one in three applicants (35%). There was a much stronger growth in the proportions of applicants and entrants from Sixth Form Colleges which, at least in the later period, counterbalanced a declining proportion from other FE/HE institutions. However, our analyses do not include applicants and entrants to HE delivered in FE institutions, many of whom may have previously studied at an FE institution. To the extent that HE has grown within FE institutions, therefore, our data may exaggerate the decline of these institutions as a pathway to HE. Applicants from Grammar Schools and independent schools consistently had the highest success rates and were least affected by the squeeze on places in 2010.

In contrast with England, a clear majority of Welsh-domiciled applicants have come from comprehensive schools, and nearly a quarter from FE/HE institutions (Table 17b). There were no Grammar Schools in Wales during this period, and Sixth Form Colleges and independent schools accounted for considerably fewer applicants than in England. Between 1996 and 2000 there was a trend for more applicants to come from comprehensives and fewer from FE/HE institutions. Since the early 2000s the pattern has been relatively stable. A distinctive feature of the Welsh applicants, which contrasts with their English peers, is the relatively high success rate of those from comprehensive schools, very similar to the success rate from independent schools.

The picture for Northern Ireland also reflects the distinctive institutional structure of its education system (Table 17c). More than half of applicants and entrants have been from Grammar Schools. The proportion applying from other state schools - which include secondary as well as comprehensive schools - more than doubled between 2006 and 2010, to reach nearly a quarter of applicants in 2010. Conversely, the proportion applying from FE/HE institutions fell during the 2000s. Success rates were considerably higher among

applicants from Grammar Schools than from other institutions, and remained so over the period.

Finally, Table 17d shows the institutional patterns for Scottish-domiciled applicants. As for Welsh-domiciled applicants, these patterns are dominated by state (comprehensive) schools; Scotland has no selective Grammar Schools or Sixth Form Colleges. However, it has a larger independent sector than Wales, and its share of applicants and entrants to HE is similar to that in England, but with less evidence of recent decline. The FE/HE sector expanded its role as a pathway to HE, and by 2010 accounted for a similar proportion of applicants and entrants as in England. Applicants from independent schools have consistently had the highest success rates (apart from the 'other/no information' category), followed by comprehensive schools.

Qualification pathways

The UCAS dataset provides summary information about the qualifications of applicants, including the overall numbers of awards at A-level, A/S-level, Scottish Higher and Advanced Higher, Welsh Baccalaureate and International Baccalaureate. The data available to us do not include grades or subjects of awards, but we have UCAS points for the two earlier cohorts and tariff scores for the cohorts from 2004 to 2010 (see below). A further limitation is that information on qualifications is only available for those candidates whose examination results were linked electronically through the 'Awarding Body Linkage' (ABL) as part of the administrative process. The ABL process did not include the qualifications of all UCAS applicants: data on qualifications are missing for 31% of applicants overall, although the figure is lower (16%) for the under-21 age group and considerably higher (79%) for applicants age 21 and over. (We note that applicants would have reported qualification details on their application forms, but these are not included in the UCAS data except for a 'flag' to indicate students attempting HNC or HND qualifications.)

Table 18 focuses on the under-21 age group, for whom the problem of missing information is least serious, and summarises the main qualifications of applicants and entrants. For simplicity, we have summarised each applicant's 'main' qualification for HE; in some cases applicants gained awards at both A-level and Scottish Higher Grade, and we have classified their qualification pathway according to the award of which they had the largest number. If an applicant had A-levels as well as an International Baccalaureate, we classified her/his pathway as the latter qualification. Applicants with the Welsh Baccalaureate are classified according to the main qualification which contributed to it (most commonly A-levels), although we report separate figures for the Welsh Baccalaureate below.

For the UK as a whole, the main qualification pathway to HE was through A-levels. About a half of all applicants and entrants in 2010 (of those whose qualifications are known) had three A-levels, a proportion which had grown since 2000. A declining proportion had one or two A-levels. Fewer than one in ten applicants (UK-wide) had Scottish Highers, and tiny numbers had AS-levels only, the International Baccalaureate or Higher National qualifications. From 2004 onwards the 'other tariff points' category includes applicants who had none of the qualifications listed above but at least one qualification that contributed to

the UCAS tariff. These accounted for 6% of applicants and 5% of entrants in 2010. However, 18% of the under-21 cohort (in 2010) had no information on qualifications; these are excluded from the 100% base in Table 18 but it is likely that many of them had other ‘non-mainstream’ qualifications.

Success rates varied with the number of A-levels or Highers held. This trend was relatively consistent over time, although the tighter competition of 2010 appears to have disproportionately affected candidates with only 1-2 A-levels (but not, surprisingly, those with only 1-3 Highers). Applicants with International Baccalaureates have had success rates above the average since 2004; those with HNs or other tariff-rated qualifications have had success rates below the average.

Patterns in England are similar to those for the UK as a whole (table not shown). In Wales the proportions of applicants and entrants with only 1-2 A-levels were consistently higher than in England (21% and 19% respectively in 2010), although as in England they declined over the period. Conversely, lower (but relatively stable) proportions of applicants and entrants had 4 or more A-levels (8% and 10% respectively in 2010). Welsh success rates for A-level-qualified applicants were slightly higher than in England, for candidates with the same number of A levels. However, in 2008 8% of Welsh applicants and in 2010 23% had completed the Welsh Baccalaureate, most frequently including A-levels. Their success rates in entry to HE were high (88% and 87% respectively). In Northern Ireland more than two thirds of applicants and entrants (68% and 72% respectively) had 3 A-levels; success rates tended to be slightly lower than elsewhere in the UK.

Only a tiny proportion of Scottish-domiciled applicants and entrants held A-levels rather than Highers (2% in each cohort). There was a slight increase in the average number of Highers held: in 2010 the modal group held 4-5 Highers (41% of applicants and 43% of entrants), followed by the group with 6 or more Highers (32%, 39%) and those with 1-3 Highers (21%, 13%).

Educational attainment

The UCAS point score (in 1996 and 2000) and tariff (2004-2010) were summary measures of attainment that took account of grades as well as numbers of qualifications, and were used by some universities in their selection processes. The creation of tariff scores required UCAS to recognise equivalences between different types of qualifications in order to establish a common system of comparing applicants’ qualifications. The equivalences of the current UCAS tariff are available from the UCAS website, but we do not have information about how the earlier point score was constructed. The UCAS point score and tariff were derived from qualifications provided as part of the ABL, and are only available for 69% of applicants overall and 84% of under-21s.

For our analysis, we have created summary variables from the UCAS point score and tariff by grouping them into quintiles within each cohort; that is, five groups respectively comprising the highest UCAS scores, the next highest, and so on. Subject to the ‘lumpiness’ of the data the groups are of equal size, when based on the full UK cohort of applicants aged under-21 with information on qualifications (Table 19). The trends shown in Table 19 do not

show changes in absolute levels of attainment among either applicants or entrants, as the quintiles are calculated for each cohort. The Table confirms that success rates were higher among more highly-qualified applicants; entrants were therefore better qualified, on average, than applicants. Less-qualified applicants were more likely to be squeezed out - that is, to fail to gain HE places - in more competitive conditions of 1996 and 2010.

Table 20 shows that the distribution of applicants across the attainment quintiles varies across the home countries. For example, Northern Ireland has the smallest proportion, and Scotland the largest proportion, of applicants in the highest qualified category. In the case of Northern Ireland this appears to reflect the smaller number of Northern Ireland students attempting more than three A-levels (the same was true of Welsh applicants in earlier years). In the case of Scotland the difference may reflect issues in comparing Scottish and other qualifications; if the UCAS tariff is even slightly generous to Highers relative to A-levels this would result in a significant difference in the distribution across the quintiles.

In each country entrants have a higher qualifications profile than applicants, reflecting the correlation between qualification quintiles and success rates shown in the third panel of the table. Success rates for the middle and lower qualification groups are considerably lower in Scotland and Northern Ireland than in England or Wales. In Scotland this may partly reflect the lack of comparability between the qualification quintiles; if we assume a similar underlying distribution of 'true' attainment in each country then the 'medium' group in Scotland would roughly correspond to the 'low' group in England or Wales. In Northern Ireland, where the tariff is based mainly on the same qualifications as in England and Wales, the explanation is less clear, and may reflect the sharper competition for the relatively limited HE opportunities available within the territory, and the unwillingness or inability of some applicants to accept places elsewhere.

Discussion

To summarise our findings, we return to the research questions posed at the beginning of the paper. The first asks about the social, demographic and educational characteristics of applicants and entrants to full-time undergraduate HE institutions: have these characteristics changed over time, and are there different trends across the four home countries?

We start by looking at applicants. Throughout the period of our study the modal applicant was 18 years old, white, female, middle class and with no reported disability. She applied to HE on the basis of A-levels or (if Scottish domiciled) Highers. Applicants' previous educational institutions were more varied, and ranged across selective and non-selective state schools, FE institutions and independent schools.

To what extent did applicants become more diverse, and move away from this 'modal' pattern? The most consistent and (in proportionate terms) largest trend was the growth in the proportion of applicants from non-white ethnic groups, from 15% to 22% over the period, with the largest increase among Black Africans. The UCAS data do not cover non-applicants, so we cannot say to what extent this trend occurred because non-white ethnic groups formed a growing proportion of the population 'at risk' of applying to HE, or to what

extent it reflected a greater propensity of these groups to apply. We also observe trends towards greater diversity with respect to age (a growing proportion of applicants were aged 21 or over) and disability (reported by a growing proportion of applicants). However, neither trend was as clear-cut as the trend in ethnic composition, and both were visible only during the 2000s. And other trends reduced diversity, or involved minimal change. The proportion of applicants who were female - the modal category - increased over the period; and within the limitations of our data on social background we do not find a clear trend in the social-class composition of applicants. There were modest trends in the educational backgrounds of applicants - away from FE colleges and independent schools and towards Sixth Form Colleges - but it is debatable whether this represents greater diversity. The main trend in qualification pathways - towards applying and entering with exactly three A-levels - represents less diversity.

The social, demographic and educational characteristics of applicants varied across the home countries. In this paper we have compared the home countries of the UK on the basis of the domiciles of applicants and not the location of the institutions to which they applied. Patterns and trends in cross-border applications will be examined in a later paper. The differences in applicants' characteristics primarily reflected differences in the four countries' social and demographic structures and in their education systems. Without comparable data on the populations 'at risk' it is hard to judge whether, or to what extent, any of this variation also reflected differences in the openness or equity of the respective societies and their education systems. Thus, the very wide variation in the proportion of non-white applicants (from 2% in Northern Ireland to 25% in England in 2010, with Wales and Scotland both at 7%) primarily reflects differences in the ethnic composition of each country's population. Similarly, a higher proportion of applicants from Northern Ireland (and to a much lesser extent Wales) were from less advantaged social backgrounds; this at least partly reflects differences in the class structures of the home countries. Conversely, the gender distribution of applicants was similar across the four countries, reflecting the similarity in their respective populations. A slightly smaller proportion of Northern Ireland applicants reported a disability - possibly a reporting effect. The different qualification pathways reflected, not only the different qualifications available in the four countries (Highers in Scotland compared with A-levels elsewhere, and the Welsh Baccalaureate in Wales) but also apparent differences in schools' presentation policies: more applicants in England had four or more A-levels. The different age composition of applicants - and especially the relatively large proportions of 17 year-olds and of older applicants in Scotland - at least partly reflect differences in the education systems. The educational institutions from which applicants sought to enter university reflect the different upper-secondary systems of the four countries, dominated by Grammar Schools in Northern Ireland, comprehensive schools in Scotland and Wales and a more diverse range of institutions, in which Sixth Form Colleges also play a significant role, in England. FE colleges provided a significant minority pathway in all four systems, especially in Wales; independent schools were more important in Scotland and England than in Wales or in Northern Ireland, where they account for a mere 1% of applicants.

Whereas there were large differences across the four home countries in the social and demographic composition of applicants, the trends were remarkably similar. With one or two small exceptions - the gender balance remained more stable in Northern Ireland, and Scotland appeared to overtake England's position of having the largest proportion of higher-class applicants - the countries tended to change in parallel, maintaining their existing differentials. This was in spite of the different rates of expansion in the four countries; the number of applicants rose by 65% in England compared with 35% in Northern Ireland over the period, with Scotland (45%) and Wales (44%) in between (see Working Paper 1, Table 1b).

However, trends in the educational backgrounds of applicants were not parallel. In England the main trend was an increase in the proportion of applicants from Sixth Form Colleges and a decline in the proportions from (other) FE colleges and independent schools. The proportions applying from FE colleges also fell in Wales (in the early part of the period) and in Northern Ireland, but increased in Scotland.

Finally, how have these trends among applicants converted into entrants? Unsurprisingly, applicants with lower qualification levels were less likely to be successful, that is, to enter an HE institution as an outcome of the UCAS process. Applicants who were young, male, white, from a higher social class or with no reported disability had higher success rates. These differences were mainly small, except in the case of age, and they take no account of the associations or interactions among these characteristics, or of their correlation with qualifications. The differentials with respect to age and gender increased slightly over the period; the other differentials remained broadly constant, although among under-21s the gap between the success rates of whites and non-whites disappeared. There was, however, an apparent tendency for more marginal applicants - older, non-white, lower social-class or with lower qualifications - to be 'squeezed out' in the final cohort of the study (2010) when the competition for places was tighter. The differentials in success rates were broadly similar across the home countries, although age differences tended to be smaller, and ethnic and social-class differences slightly wider, in Scotland; Northern Ireland had relatively wide social-class differences but relatively narrow ethnic differences. Trends were very broadly similar across the home countries, although the relative success of older applicants declined most in England.

Future analyses will attempt to tease out the separate influences of each of these social, demographic and educational characteristics on applicants' chances of success, and chart the interactions between them and the variations over time and between the four home countries.

Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Age composition of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort (%)

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	17 or younger	3	3	2	2	2	2
	18	47	47	47	49	45	43
	19	20	22	21	19	21	21
	20	7	8	7	7	8	8
	21-24	10	9	10	11	12	12
	25+	14	11	12	12	13	15
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	358685	377020	399696	417865	485088	566321
Entrants	17 or younger	3	3	2	2	2	2
	18	49	49	50	51	47	46
	19	20	23	22	20	21	23
	20	6	8	7	7	8	8
	21-24	9	8	9	9	10	10
	25+	13	10	10	10	11	11
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	262935	297079	321499	332586	390608	402615
Success rate (entrants as % of applicants)	17 or younger	75	80	77	76	78	72
	18	77	81	84	84	84	77
	19	74	81	84	83	84	77
	20	69	77	79	79	80	70
	21-24	66	73	72	70	72	60
	25+	66	71	69	66	69	54
	All	73	79	80	80	81	71
Number of applicants	17 or younger	10452	10244	9737	8855	9288	9492
	18	167020	178233	189749	203644	217433	240696
	19	69966	83479	84092	80812	99533	117692
	20	24316	29368	28824	30319	39996	45928
	21-24	36087	34575	41268	44488	56011	68802
	25+	50844	41121	46026	49747	62827	83711
	All	358685	377020	399696	417865	485088	566321

Table 2: Age composition of applicants and entrants, and success rates, in 2010, by country of domicile (%)

		England	Wales	NI	Scotland
Applicants	17 or younger	0.2	0.2	0.1	18
	18	43	45	46	35
	19	22	20	26	10
	20	8	8	8	6
	21-24	12	13	12	14
	25+	15	15	8	18
	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	476519	24352	19525	45925
Entrants	17 or younger	0.2	0.1	0.1	19
	18	47	49	48	37
	19	24	21	27	10
	20	8	7	8	6
	21-24	10	11	10	12
	25+	11	11	7	16
	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	338955	18150	13419	32091
Success rate (Entrants as % of applicants)	17 or younger	62	59	53	73
	18	77	82	72	75
	19	78	80	70	69
	20	71	72	68	66
	21-24	60	63	60	63
	25+	53	58	57	63
	All	71	75	69	70
Number of applicants	17 or younger	1068	37	19	8368
	18	204879	10947	8974	15896
	19	103272	4830	5167	4423
	20	39542	1860	1551	2975
	21-24	57248	3090	2257	6207
	25+	70510	3588	1557	8056
	All	476519	24352	19525	45925

Table 3: 21+ year-olds as a percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country of domicile

			cohort					
			1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	England		25	20	22	22	25	27
	Wales		23	19	23	25	25	27
	Northern Ireland		14	13	16	17	17	20
	Scotland		24	23	24	24	27	31
Entrants	England		22	18	19	19	21	21
	Wales		22	17	20	21	22	22
	Northern Ireland		12	11	14	14	15	17
	Scotland		23	22	23	23	26	28
Success rate	England	under-21s	76	81	84	84	84	77
		21+ year-olds	66	71	70	68	70	56
		All	73	79	81	80	81	71
	Wales	under-21s	78	83	86	85	85	80
		21+ year-olds	71	72	74	67	72	60
		All	76	81	83	80	82	75
	Northern Ireland	under-21s	63	72	78	75	81	71
		21+ year-olds	54	64	64	58	67	58
		All	62	71	76	72	79	69
	Scotland	under-21s	77	81	78	78	79	73
		21+ year-olds	71	77	74	71	75	63
		All	75	80	77	76	78	70
Number of applicants	England	under-21s	221828	247629	256027	267170	308096	348761
		21+ year-olds	73104	62772	71432	77539	100337	127758
		All	294932	310401	327459	344709	408433	476519
	Wales	under-21s	13248	14466	14570	15673	16483	17674
		21+ year-olds	4057	3377	4236	5195	5588	6678
		All	17305	17843	18806	20868	22071	24352
	Northern Ireland	under-21s	12513	13166	14208	14289	14091	15711
		21+ year-olds	1968	1925	2742	2914	2925	3814
		All	14481	15091	16950	17203	17016	19525
	Scotland	under-21s	24165	26063	27597	26498	27580	31662
		21+ year-olds	7802	7622	8884	8587	9988	14263
		All	31967	33685	36481	35085	37568	45925

Table 4: Females as percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	% Female	52	53	55	56	57	57
Entrants	% Female	51	53	54	55	56	55
Success rate (%)	Female	72	78	79	78	79	69
	Male	75	79	82	82	83	74
	All	73	79	80	80	81	71
Number of applicants	Female	186519	201607	220821	233135	276365	322552
	Male	172166	175413	178875	184730	208723	243769
	All	358685	377020	399696	417865	485088	566321

Table 5: Females as percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort: under-21s only

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	% Female	52	53	55	55	56	55
Entrants	% Female	51	53	54	54	55	54
Success rates	Female	74	80	82	82	83	75
	Male	77	81	84	84	85	78
	All	76	81	83	83	84	76
Number of applicants	Female	141413	159879	170291	177385	203277	227241
	Male	130341	141445	142111	146245	162973	186567
	All	271754	301324	312402	323630	366250	413808

Table 6: Females as a percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country of domicile

			cohort					
			1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	England		52	53	55	55	57	57
	Wales		53	55	59	59	59	58
	Northern Ireland		56	57	57	58	58	56
	Scotland		53	54	55	56	56	58
Entrants	England		51	53	54	54	56	55
	Wales		53	55	58	57	57	56
	Northern Ireland		54	56	56	56	57	55
	Scotland		52	53	54	54	54	57
Success rate	England	Female	72	78	80	79	79	69
		Male	75	79	82	82	83	74
	Wales	Female	76	80	82	78	80	72
		Male	77	82	85	84	84	77
	Northern Ireland	Female	59	70	74	69	77	67
		Male	65	73	78	75	81	71
	Scotland	Female	74	79	75	74	76	68
		Male	77	82	79	79	80	72
Number of applicants	England	Female	152356	165029	179930	191226	232574	270624
		Male	142576	145372	147529	153483	175859	205895
	Wales	Female	9178	9830	11033	12308	12913	14081
		Male	8127	8013	7773	8560	9158	10271
	Northern Ireland	Female	8082	8566	9724	9931	9900	10992
		Male	6399	6525	7226	7272	7116	8533
	Scotland	Female	16903	18182	20134	19670	20978	26855
		Male	15064	15503	16347	15415	16590	19070

Table 7: Ethnic composition of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	White	81	77	76	76	76	77
	Mixed			2	3	3	3
	Asian-Indian	4	4	4	4	3	3
	Asian-Pakistani	2	3	3	3	3	3
	Asian-Bangladeshi	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Asian-Chinese	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Asian-other	1	1	1	1	1	2
	Black Caribbean	1	1	1	1	2	2
	Black African	2	2	3	4	5	6
	Black- other	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3
	Other	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Not stated	5	7	6	4	4	1
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	<i>N (=100%)</i>	358685	377020	399696	417865	485088	566321
Entrants	White	82	78	77	76	76	78
	Mixed			2	3	3	3
	Asian-Indian	4	5	4	4	4	3
	Asian-Pakistani	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Asian-Bangladeshi	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Asian-Chinese	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Asian-other	1	1	1	1	1	2
	Black Caribbean	1	1	1	1	1	2
	Black African	2	2	3	3	4	5
	Black- other	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
	Other	1	2	1	1	1	1
	Not stated	5	7	6	5	5	2
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	<i>N (=100%)</i>	262935	297079	321499	332586	390608	402615
Success rate (%)	White	74	80	81	79	81	72
	Mixed			80	79	79	70
	Asian-Indian	73	80	83	83	83	73
	Asian-Pakistani	66	72	76	77	79	68
	Asian-Bangladeshi	68	76	80	80	80	72
	Asian-Chinese	78	83	83	84	84	76
	Asian-other	69	79	78	77	76	67
	Black Caribbean	61	69	73	75	74	63
	Black African	62	69	70	69	71	58
	Black-other	62	70	73	73	73	59
	Other	69	78	76	77	76	68
	Not stated	70	76	79	92	93	82
	All	73	79	80	80	81	71

Table 7: Ethnic composition of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort (continued)

Number of applicants	White	289480	290699	305738	319014	366609	436050
	Mixed	0	0	9019	11538	15080	19231
	Asian-Indian	13841	16687	16183	16720	16923	18508
	Asian-Pakistani	8277	9879	10690	11361	12843	15932
	Asian-Bangladeshi	2248	2958	3449	3892	4532	5614
	Asian-Chinese	3064	3520	3995	3882	4244	4420
	Asian-other	4155	4581	4482	5165	6913	9554
	Black Caribbean	4391	4181	4993	6146	7862	9801
	Black African	6821	7188	11742	15563	21931	31358
	Black-other	1871	2635	1188	1480	1626	1911
	Other	5531	6980	3560	4536	5024	6202
	Not stated	19006	27712	24657	18568	21501	7740
	All	358685	377020	399696	417865	485088	566321

Table 8: Non-whites as percentage of applicants and entrants, by cohort

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	% non-white	15	17	18	20	21	22
Entrants	% non-white	14	16	18	20	20	21
Success rate	white	74	80	81	79	81	72
	non-white	68	76	78	77	77	67
	All	73	79	81	79	80	71
Number of applicants	white	289480	290699	305738	319014	366609	436050
	non-white	50199	58609	69301	80283	96978	122531
	All	339679	349308	375039	399297	463587	558581

Table 9: Non-whites as % of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort: under-21s only

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	% non-white	13	16	17	18	19	19
Entrants	% non-white	12	15	17	19	19	19
Success rate	white	76	81	83	83	84	76
	non-white	72	79	83	83	84	76
	All	76	81	83	83	84	76
Number of applicants	white	227253	241447	249283	256727	289173	330656
	non-white	34518	44527	51101	58199	67590	79403
	All	261771	285974	300384	314926	356763	410059

Table 10: Non-whites as percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country of domicile

			cohort					
			1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	England		17	20	22	23	24	25
	Wales		4	4	5	6	6	7
	Northern Ireland		1	1	2	1	2	2
	Scotland		4	5	5	6	7	7
Entrants	England		16	19	21	23	23	23
	Wales		4	4	5	6	6	7
	Northern Ireland		1	1	2	1	2	2
	Scotland		4	5	5	6	6	6
Success rate	England	white	75	80	82	81	81	72
		non-white	68	76	78	77	77	67
	Wales	white	77	81	83	79	81	75
		non-white	72	80	81	79	78	70
	Northern Ireland	white	62	71	76	72	79	69
		non-white	61	77	77	70	79	66
	Scotland	white	76	80	77	75	78	70
		non-white	72	75	73	71	71	62
Number of applicants	England	white	231116	231817	240662	252231	297396	352792
		non-white	48173	56218	66210	76843	92963	117354
	Wales	white	15581	15870	16808	18677	19646	22215
		non-white	617	734	939	1149	1356	1715
	Northern Ireland	white	13872	13907	15947	16756	16212	19086
		non-white	121	151	288	253	283	372
	Scotland	white	28911	29105	32321	31350	33355	41957
		non-white	1288	1506	1864	2038	2376	3090

Table 11: Social class of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort: under-21s only

		cohort						
		1996	2000		2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	RG 1	15	14	SEC 1	21	19	17	19
	RG 2	41	41	SEC 2	28	26	24	25
	RG 3	11	11	SEC 3	19	18	17	17
	RG 4	25	25	SEC 4	19	19	21	19
	unknown	7	9	unknown	14	19	20	20
	All	100	100	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	271754	301324		312402	323630	366250	413808
Entrants	RG 1	17	15	SEC 1	21	20	18	20
	RG 2	42	42	SEC 2	28	26	24	26
	RG 3	11	11	SEC 3	19	18	17	17
	RG 4	24	24	SEC 4	18	18	20	18
	unknown	6	8	unknown	14	18	20	19
	All	100	100	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	205382	242903		260088	268575	306762	315930
Success rate	RG 1	81	85	SEC 1	86	86	87	81
	RG 2	78	82	SEC 2	84	84	84	78
	RG 3	75	80	SEC 3	83	82	83	76
	RG 4	71	77	SEC 4	81	80	82	72
	unknown	69	76	unknown	81	81	83	75
	All	76	81	All	83	83	84	76
Number of applicants	RG 1	42000	42515	SEC 1	64094	62119	63881	77151
	RG 2	110790	122621	SEC 2	86150	83332	88228	104695
	RG 3	30617	34031	SEC 3	58786	57788	63528	69464
	RG 4	69229	75845	SEC 4	59479	60040	75735	80490
	unknown	19118	26312	unknown	43893	60351	74878	82008
	All	271754	301324	All	312402	323630	366250	413808

Table 12: Social class of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by country: under-21s in 2010 only

		England	Wales	NI	Scotland
Applicants	SEC1	19	16	12	20
	SEC 2	25	26	25	25
	SEC 3	16	18	24	16
	SEC 4	19	22	22	18
	Unknown	20	19	17	21
	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	348761	17674	15711	31662
Entrants	SEC1	20	17	13	21
	SEC 2	26	26	26	25
	SEC 3	16	17	24	15
	SEC 4	18	21	21	17
	Unknown	19	19	16	22
	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	267532	14131	11188	23079
Success rate (Entrants as % of applicants)	SEC1	81	83	77	79
	SEC 2	78	81	75	73
	SEC 3	76	80	71	70
	SEC 4	73	77	67	67
	Unknown	75	80	68	75
	All	77	80	71	73
Number of applicants	SEC1	66181	2810	1934	6226
	SEC 2	88273	4560	3882	7980
	SEC 3	57511	3095	3804	5054
	SEC 4	67470	3801	3476	5743
	Unknown	69326	3408	2615	6659
	All	348761	17674	15711	31662

Table 13: 'Managerial and Professional' as percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by country and cohort: under-21s with known social class only

	Domicile		cohort						
			1996	2000		2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	England	% social class 1&2	61	61		57	56	53	55
	Wales	% social class 1&2	58	58		54	52	50	52
	NI	% social class 1&2	50	50		43	42	43	44
	Scotland	% social class 1&2	61	60		55	57	55	57
Entrants	England	% social class 1&2	63	62		58	57	53	57
	Wales	% social class 1&2	59	59		55	53	51	53
	NI	% social class 1&2	53	52		44	44	44	47
	Scotland	% social class 1&2	63	61		57	59	57	59
Success rates	England	SC 1 & 2	79	83		86	86	86	79
		SC 3 & 4	73	78		83	83	83	74
	Wales	SC 1 & 2	81	85		88	86	87	82
		SC 3 & 4	76	81		84	83	83	78
	NI	SC 1 & 2	67	77		81	78	84	75
		SC 3 & 4	60	69		76	73	80	69
	Scotland	SC 1 & 2	80	84		81	81	82	76
		SC 3 & 4	73	79		75	74	75	68
Number of applicants	England	SC 1 & 2	126209	137357		125308	121519	128634	154454
		SC 3 & 4	79923	88766		94828	95262	116278	124981
	Wales	SC 1 & 2	7067	7653		6663	6493	6487	7370
		SC 3 & 4	5186	5574		5767	6083	6418	6896
	NI	SC 1 & 2	5866	6080		5194	5056	5094	5816
		SC 3 & 4	5873	6072		7016	7024	6832	7280
	Scotland	SC 1 & 2	13648	14046		13079	12383	11894	14206
		SC 3 & 4	8864	9464		10654	9459	9735	10797

Table 14: 'Disabled' as percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	Disability	5	4	5	6	6	7
Entrants	Disability	4	4	5	5	6	6
Success rate	Disability	71	77	79	78	80	69
	no disability	73	79	81	80	81	71
Number of applicants	Disability	16550	14853	20132	22994	28458	37333
	no disability	342135	362167	379564	394871	456630	528988

Table 15: 'Disabled' as percentage of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by country and cohort

			cohort					
			1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	England		5	4	5	6	6	7
	Wales		5	4	5	5	5	7
	Northern Ireland		4	3	3	4	4	5
	Scotland		4	4	5	5	9	7
Entrants	England		5	4	5	5	6	7
	Wales		5	4	5	5	5	7
	Northern Ireland		4	3	3	3	4	4
	Scotland		4	4	5	5	10	6
Success rate	England	Disability	71	77	79	78	79	70
		no disability	74	79	81	80	81	71
	Wales	Disability	75	80	79	78	80	72
		no disability	76	81	83	80	82	75
	Northern Ireland	Disability	59	68	68	65	75	63
		no disability	62	71	76	72	79	69
	Scotland	Disability	73	78	74	72	84	68
		no disability	75	81	77	76	77	70
Number of applicants	England	Disability	13774	12462	16878	19361	23218	31697
		no disability	281158	297939	310581	325348	385215	444822
	Wales	Disability	830	730	897	1082	1122	1671
		no disability	16475	17113	17909	19786	20949	22681
	Northern Ireland	Disability	535	399	559	644	665	939
		no disability	13946	14692	16391	16559	16351	18586
	Scotland	Disability	1411	1262	1798	1907	3453	3026
		no disability	30556	32423	34683	33178	34115	42899

Table 16: Previous educational sector of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort: under-21s only

		cohort					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	State school	43	44	38	39	39	38
	Grammar School			7	6	8	8
	6th form college			13	14	18	18
	FE/HE	34	35	20	22	16	14
	Independent School	13	12	11	11	11	10
	Other/no info	9	10	10	8	8	12
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	271754	301324	312402	323630	366250	413808
Entrants	State school	45	45	39	39	39	38
	Grammar School			7	7	9	8
	6th form college			14	14	18	19
	FE/HE	31	33	19	21	15	13
	Independent School	14	12	12	11	11	10
	Other/no info	10	10	10	8	8	11
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	205382	242903	260088	268575	306762	315930
Success rate	State school	78	82	84	84	84	77
	Grammar School			88	86	88	83
	6th form college			86	85	85	78
	FE/HE	69	76	77	77	78	70
	Independent School	83	86	87	87	85	82
	Other/no info	78	85	83	83	84	71
	All	76	81	83	83	84	76
Number of applicants	State school	117668	132848	119908	126215	142135	156166
	Grammar School	0	0	20327	20489	30296	32032
	6th form college	0	0	41121	44628	66425	75685
	FE/HE	93636	104956	63559	71834	58254	59387
	Independent School	35523	34681	35619	34455	38804	40077
	Other/no info	24927	28839	31868	26009	30336	50461
	All	271754	301324	312402	323630	366250	413808

Table 17a: Previous educational sector of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country: under-21s in England only

		Domicile: England					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	State school	39	40	36	37	36	35
	Grammar School			5	5	7	7
	6th form college			16	16	21	21
	FE/HE	38	38	21	23	16	14
	Independent School	14	13	13	12	11	10
	Other/no info	9	9	10	8	8	13
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	221828	247629	256027	267170	308096	348761
Entrants	State school	40	41	37	37	37	36
	Grammar School			5	5	7	7
	6th form college			16	17	21	22
	FE/HE	34	36	19	22	15	13
	Independent School	16	13	13	12	11	11
	Other/no info	9	10	10	8	8	12
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	168601	200140	214950	224063	259467	267532
Success rate	State school	79	83	85	85	85	77
	Grammar School			89	89	89	85
	6th form college			86	85	85	78
	FE/HE	69	76	77	78	78	71
	Independent School	83	85	87	87	85	82
	Other/no info	78	85	84	84	83	71
	All	76	81	84	84	84	77
Number of applicants	State school	85955	98941	92655	98186	111211	122743
	Grammar School	0	0	12360	12625	21838	23388
	6th form college	0	0	40061	43450	65285	74434
	FE/HE	83667	94514	54044	62004	48780	48464
	Independent School	31923	31185	32124	30844	34818	36040
	Other/no info	20283	22989	24783	20061	26164	43692
	All	221828	247629	256027	267170	308096	348761

Table 17b: Previous educational sector of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country: under-21s in Wales only

		Domicile: Wales					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	State school	53	58	57	56	58	56
	6th form college			5	5	6	6
	FE/HE	33	28	24	25	24	23
	Independent School	6	5	5	4	5	5
	Other/no info	8	9	10	9	7	11
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	13248	14466	14570	15673	16483	17674
Entrants	State school	56	60	58	57	60	57
	6th form college			5	5	5	6
	FE/HE	30	26	22	23	22	22
	Independent School	6	5	5	5	5	5
	Other/no info	8	9	10	10	8	11
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	10339	12027	12487	13257	14075	14131
Success rates	State school	83	86	88	87	88	82
	6th form college			83	86	79	78
	FE/HE	70	76	79	78	80	75
	Independent School	81	87	90	88	87	83
	Other/no info	79	88	88	87	90	77
	All	78	83	86	85	85	80
Number of applicants	State school	7076	8421	8252	8763	9588	9813
	6th form college	0	0	681	780	943	1059
	FE/HE	4392	4043	3467	3950	3970	4053
	Independent School	731	701	745	698	779	798
	Other/no info	1049	1301	1423	1476	1190	1936
	All	13248	14466	14570	15673	16483	17674

Table 17c: Previous educational sector of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country: under-21s in Northern Ireland only

		Domicile: Northern Ireland					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	State school	69	69	10	10	22	24
	Grammar School			56	55	60	55
	6th form college			2	3	1	1
	FE/HE	23	26	17	16	13	14
	Independent School					1	1
	Other/no info	7	4	15	16	3	6
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	12513	13166	14208	14289	14091	15711
Entrants	State school	74	74	9	9	20	20
	Grammar School			61	60	64	61
	6th form college			3	3	1	1
	FE/HE	18	21	13	13	11	12
	Independent School					1	1
	Other/no info	7	5	13	15	3	6
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	7898	9522	11059	10659	11418	11188
Success rates	State school	68	78	76	71	73	60
	Grammar School			85	82	86	79
	6th form college			82	73	77	66
	FE/HE	50	57	63	61	71	62
	Independent School					76	61
	Other/no info	64	79	69	67	83	72
	All	63	72	78	75	81	71
Number of applicants	State school	8692	9106	1365	1394	3052	3744
	Grammar School	0	0	7961	7845	8436	8615
	6th form college	0	0	352	374	167	172
	FE/HE	2934	3456	2363	2301	1832	2140
	Independent School					152	161
	Other/no info	862	582	2126	2354	452	879
	All	12513	13166	14208	14289	14091	15711

Table 17d: Previous educational sector of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort and country: under-21s in Scotland only

		Domicile: Scotland					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	State school	66	63	64	67	66	63
	FE/HE	11	11	13	14	13	15
	Independent School	12	11	10	11	11	10
	Other/no info	11	15	13	8	9	12
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	24165	26063	27597	26498	27580	31662
Entrants	State school	66	62	63	67	65	63
	FE/HE	9	10	12	12	12	13
	Independent School	13	11	11	12	12	11
	Other/no info	12	16	14	9	10	13
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	18544	21214	21592	20596	21802	23079
Success rates	State school	76	81	78	77	78	73
	FE/HE	67	72	70	70	71	63
	Independent School	83	87	87	86	86	82
	Other/no info	83	88	84	84	90	75
	All	77	81	78	78	79	73
Number of applicants	State school	15945	16380	17636	17872	18284	19866
	FE/HE	2643	2943	3685	3579	3672	4730
	Independent School	2844	2773	2709	2892	3055	3078
	Other/no info	2733	3967	3536	2118	2530	3954
	All	24165	26063	27597	26498	27580	31662

Table 18: Qualification pathways of applicants and entrants, and success rates by cohort: under-21s only

		All UK					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	AS levels only	1	1	4	3	2	2
	1-2 A-levels	25	21	18	18	14	15
	3 A-levels	43	41	43	44	48	49
	4 + A-levels	22	27	20	21	21	19
	1-3 Scottish Highers	3	3	2	2	1	2
	4-5 Scottish Highers	4	4	4	4	3	4
	6+ Scottish Highers'	3	3	3	3	3	3
	other tariff points			5	5	6	6
	International Bacc	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.7
	HN			0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2
All with information on qualifications		100	100	100	100	100	100
N (=100%)		227007	245857	284225	281078	295141	339676
Entrants	AS levels only	0.4	1	3	2	2	2
	1-2 A-levels	19	18	17	17	13	12
	3 A-levels	46	43	46	46	49	51
	4 + A-levels	25	30	22	22	23	22
	1-3 Scottish Highers	2	2	1	1	1	1
	4-5 Scottish Highers	4	4	4	4	3	3
	6+ Scottish Highers'	3	3	3	3	3	3
	other tariff points			5	5	5	5
	International Bacc	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.7
	HN			0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
All with information on qualifications		100	100	100	100	100	100
N (=100%)		180332	206385	239705	237159	251021	266322
Success rates	AS levels only	50	55	65	64	65	56
	1-2 A-levels	62	70	77	77	78	66
	3 A-levels	85	87	89	88	88	82
	4 + A-levels	90	91	92	91	91	88
	1-3 Scottish Highers	51	60	48	46	48	46
	4-5 Scottish Highers	84	86	82	80	81	75
	6+ Scottish Highers'	95	95	93	92	93	88
	other tariff points			72	73	76	68
	International Bacc	77	80	87	89	86	84
	HN			71	71	73	66
All with information on qualifications		79	84	84	84	85	78

Table 18: Qualification pathways of applicants and entrants, and success rates by cohort: under-21s only (continued)

		All UK					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Number of applicants	AS levels only	1328	2067	10900	7658	6125	7243
	1-2 A-levels	56441	52250	52397	51059	42653	49512
	3 A-levels	96829	100918	123479	123574	141079	166489
	4 + A-levels	49864	67210	57561	58421	63236	65846
	1-3 Scottish Highers	6418	6278	4878	4443	4297	6086
	4-5 Scottish Highers	9613	9996	10282	10535	10058	12176
	6+ Scottish Highers'	5688	6301	7740	8665	7999	9434
	other tariff points	0	0	15132	14994	17432	19802
	International Bacc	826	837	513	944	1446	2340
	HN	0	0	1343	785	816	748
All with information on qualifications		227007	245857	284225	281078	295141	339676
% of cohort with no information		16	18	9	13	19	18

Table 19: Educational attainment of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by cohort: under-21s only (Quintiles based on tariff/point score standardised within cohort)

		All UK					
		1996	2000	2004	2006	2008	2010
Applicants	Highest	19	22	20	21	19	20
	High	21	15	21	18	21	20
	Medium	23	24	19	22	21	21
	Low	15	20	19	21	19	19
	Lowest	22	18	20	19	20	20
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	226235	245065	284225	281078	295141	339676
Entrants	Highest	22	24	22	23	21	23
	High	24	17	22	19	22	22
	Medium	24	25	20	22	22	22
	Low	14	20	19	20	19	18
	Lowest	15	14	17	16	17	15
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	179743	205752	239705	237159	251021	266322
Success rates	Highest	91	92	93	92	91	90
	High	89	91	90	89	89	86
	Medium	84	88	86	87	87	82
	Low	76	82	82	82	83	73
	Lowest	56	65	71	72	74	61
	All	79	84	84	84	85	78
Number of applicants	Highest	43801	53904	58095	58194	57440	68464
	High	48286	37470	58402	49574	60695	68703
	Medium	51909	58337	54771	60896	62152	70731
	Low	33107	50168	54785	58742	56511	64627
	Lowest	49132	45186	58172	53672	58343	67151
	All	226235	245065	284225	281078	295141	339676

Table 20: Educational attainment of applicants and entrants, and success rates, by country: under-21s in 2010 only

		Domicile			
		England	Wales	Northern Ireland	Scotland
Applicants	Highest	19	19	12	40
	High	20	19	22	22
	Medium	21	20	28	15
	Low	20	18	23	13
	Lowest	21	24	14	10
	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	281201	15319	13643	29513
Entrants	Highest	21	22	15	50
	High	22	20	27	23
	Medium	22	21	31	13
	Low	18	18	19	8
	Lowest	16	19	8	6
	All	100	100	100	100
	N (=100%)	222602	12482	9881	21357
Success rates	Highest	90	91	87	90
	High	87	89	88	77
	Medium	83	87	79	62
	Low	75	79	61	47
	Lowest	62	65	41	43
	All	79	81	72	72
Number of applicants	Highest	52049	2955	1670	11790
	High	56332	2841	3057	6473
	Medium	59330	3023	3885	4493
	Low	54933	2776	3127	3791
	Lowest	58557	3724	1904	2966
	All	281201	15319	13643	29513