

A new approach to access and participation in English higher education

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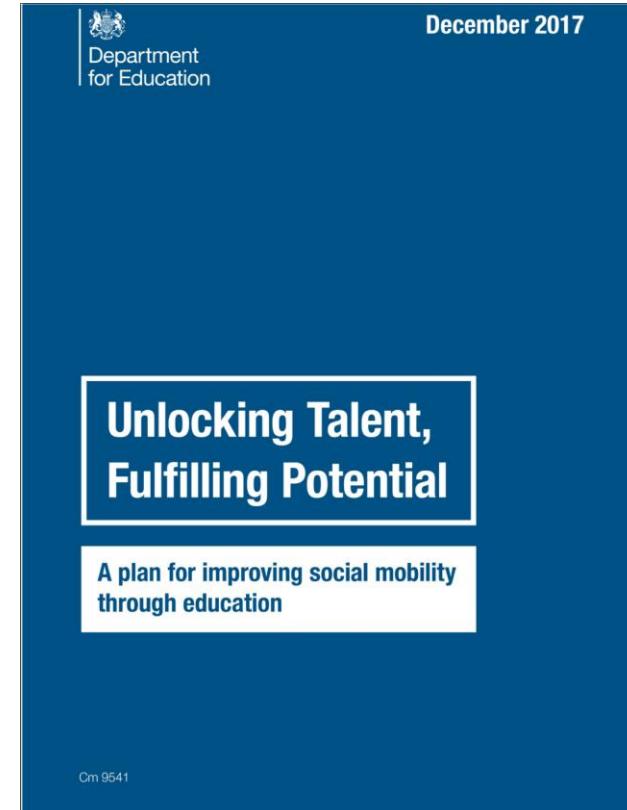
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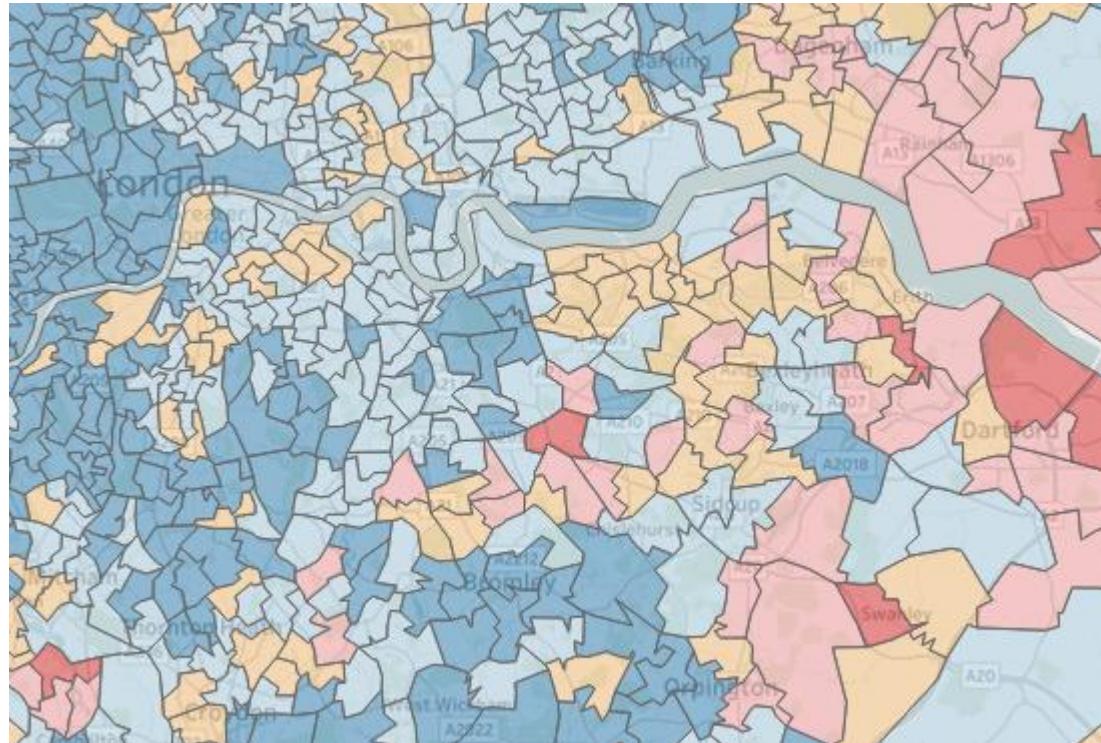
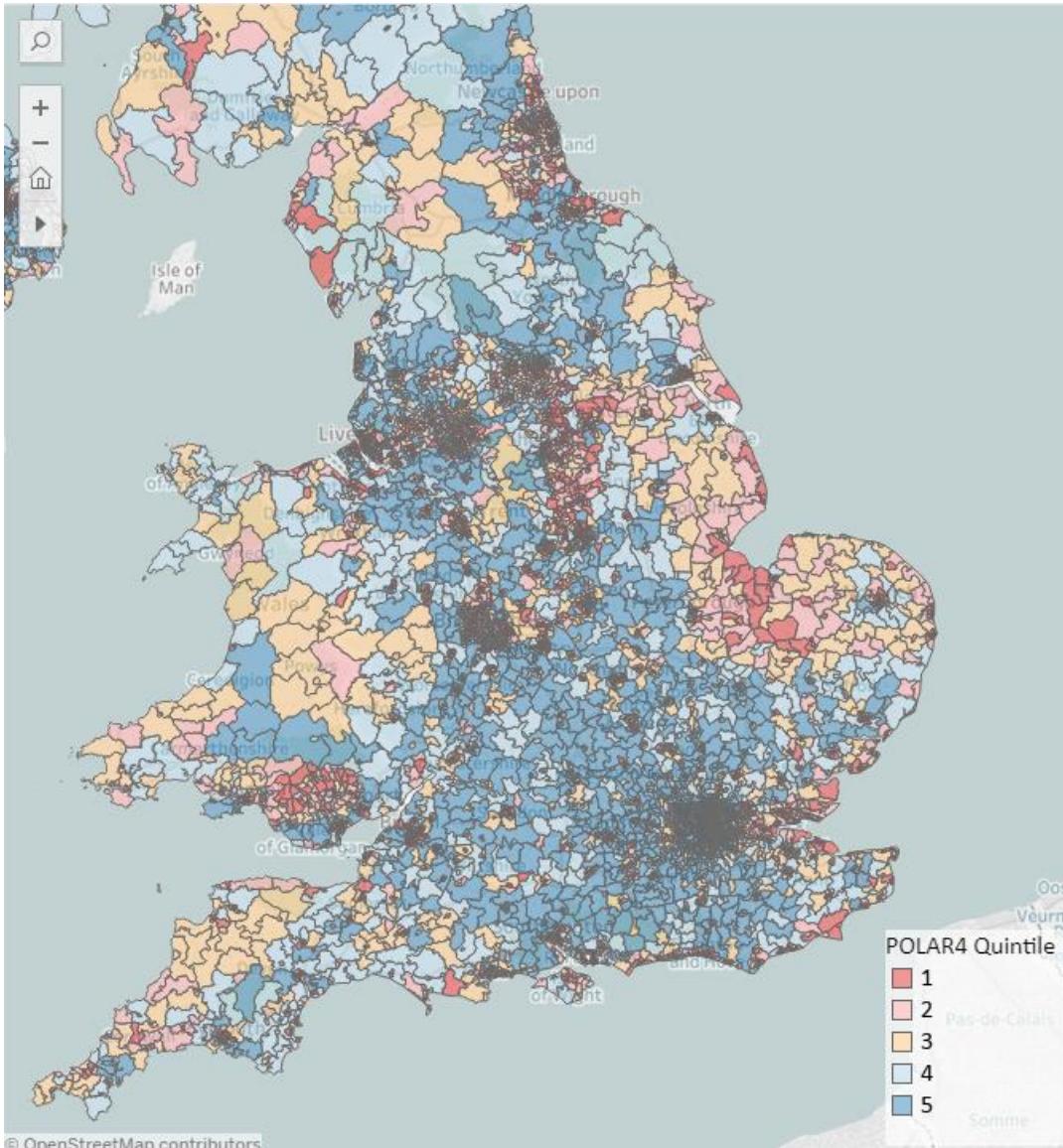
September 2018

The social mobility challenge

‘In our country today, where you start still all too often determines where you finish. And while talent is spread evenly across the country, opportunity is not. None of us should accept this. Everyone deserves a fair shot in life and a chance to go as far as their hard work and talent can take them.’



HE participation varies across the country



POLAR classifies small areas into five quintiles that reflect young participation rates across the UK. London generally has very high levels of participation but pockets such as some parts of Greenwich have lower participation.

We aim to ensure that...



**every student,
whatever their
background,**

**has a fulfilling
experience of
higher education**

**that enriches
their lives and
careers.**

Participation

Experience

Outcomes

Objective 1

All students, from all backgrounds, with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

Objective 2

All students, from all backgrounds, receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.

Objective 3

All students, from all backgrounds, are able to progress into employment, further study, and fulfilling lives, and their qualifications hold their value over time.

Value for money

Objective 4

All students, from all backgrounds, receive value for money.

OfS general duties in HERA 2017

- (a) protect the institutional autonomy of English HE providers
- (b) promote quality, and greater choice and opportunities for students, in the provision of HE
- (c) encourage competition between English HE providers in connection with the provision of HE where that competition is in the interests of students and employers, while also having regard to the benefits for students and employers resulting from collaboration between such providers
- (d) promote value for money in the provision of HE
- (e) promote equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in HE
- (f) use the OfS's resources in an efficient, effective and economic way
- (g) regulatory activities should be—
 - (i) transparent, accountable, proportionate and consistent, and
 - (ii) targeted only at cases in which action is needed.



Higher Education and Research Act 2017

CHAPTER 29

Explanatory Notes have been produced to assist in the understanding of this Act and are available separately

£23.25

The challenge set by the OfS Board

‘Our regulatory framework enables the Director for Fair Access and Participation to develop a **bold new approach** to supporting social mobility, and equality and diversity, through higher education. ...**We will be radical and ambitious** to make sure we deliver on the promise of higher education as an engine for social mobility, and a gateway to a better life for those who undertake it.’



Access and participation in higher education

The challenge

Objective 1: Access, success and progression

All students, from **all backgrounds**, with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to **access, succeed in, and progress** from higher education.

Identify measures of access, success and progression

- population referenced entry rates and participation rates,
- non-continuation rates,
- completion rates,
- chances of getting a first / upper second,
- chances of highly skilled work or further study

Identify groups with different experiences

- Underrepresented groups
- Protected equality and diversity characteristics
- Measures based on higher education participation (POLAR, GAPS),
- Intersectionality, multiple measures (MEM)

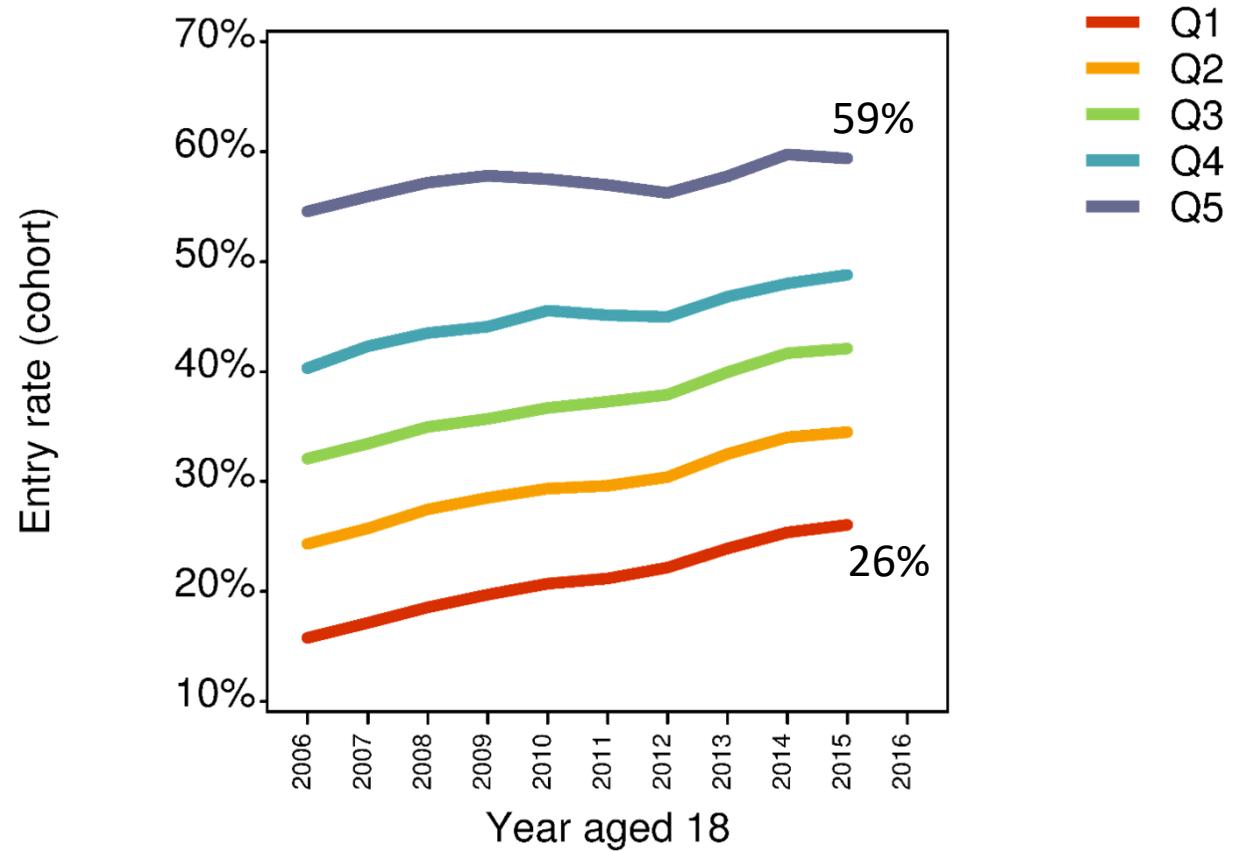
Measure gaps between different groups

- Differences in rates
- Relative chance
- Difference from expected
- And then is the gap reducing through time

Where you live - POLAR

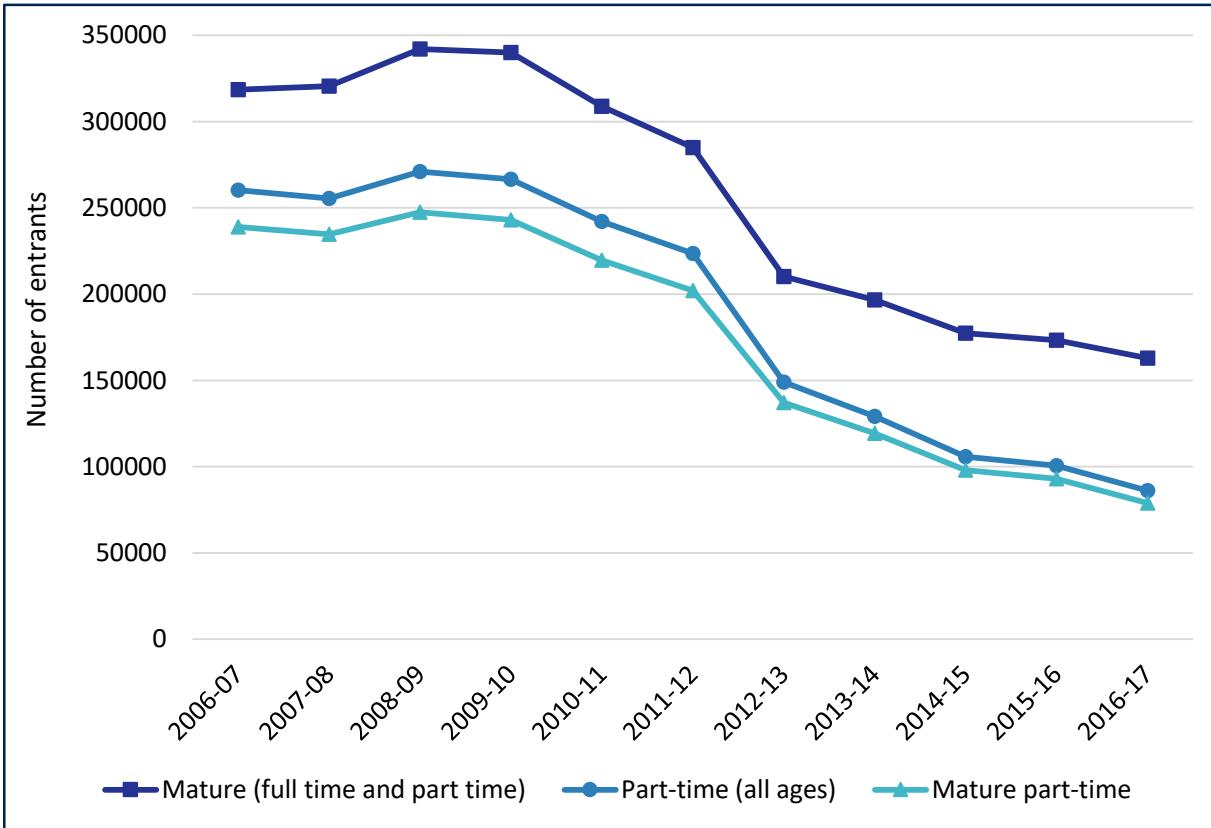
Access

Young entry rate (cohort) in England by POLAR3 groups (Q5 = advantaged)



There is a 33 percentage point gap between the proportion of young people from the highest participation areas entering higher education by age 19 compared to those from the lowest participation areas.

Mature and part-time entrants

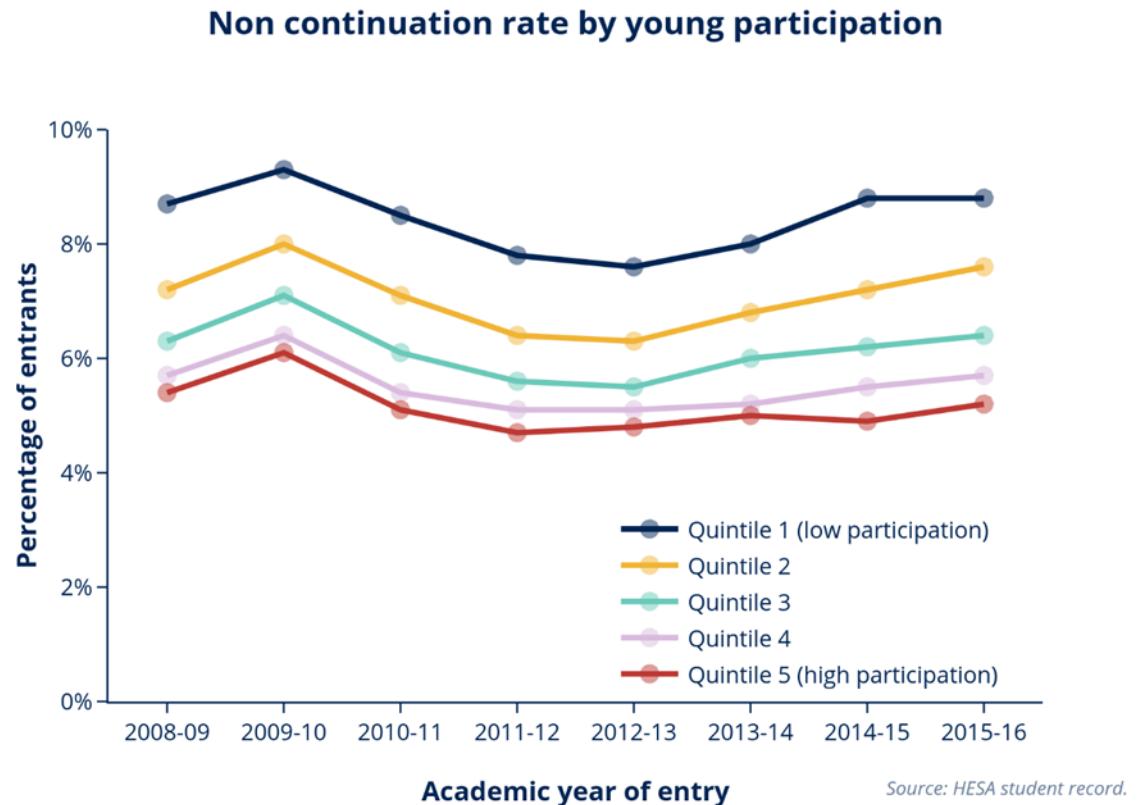


A high proportion of students studying part time are mature.

The fall in the number of mature entrants to higher education is almost entirely within part-time study.

Where you live - POLAR

Success: non-continuation

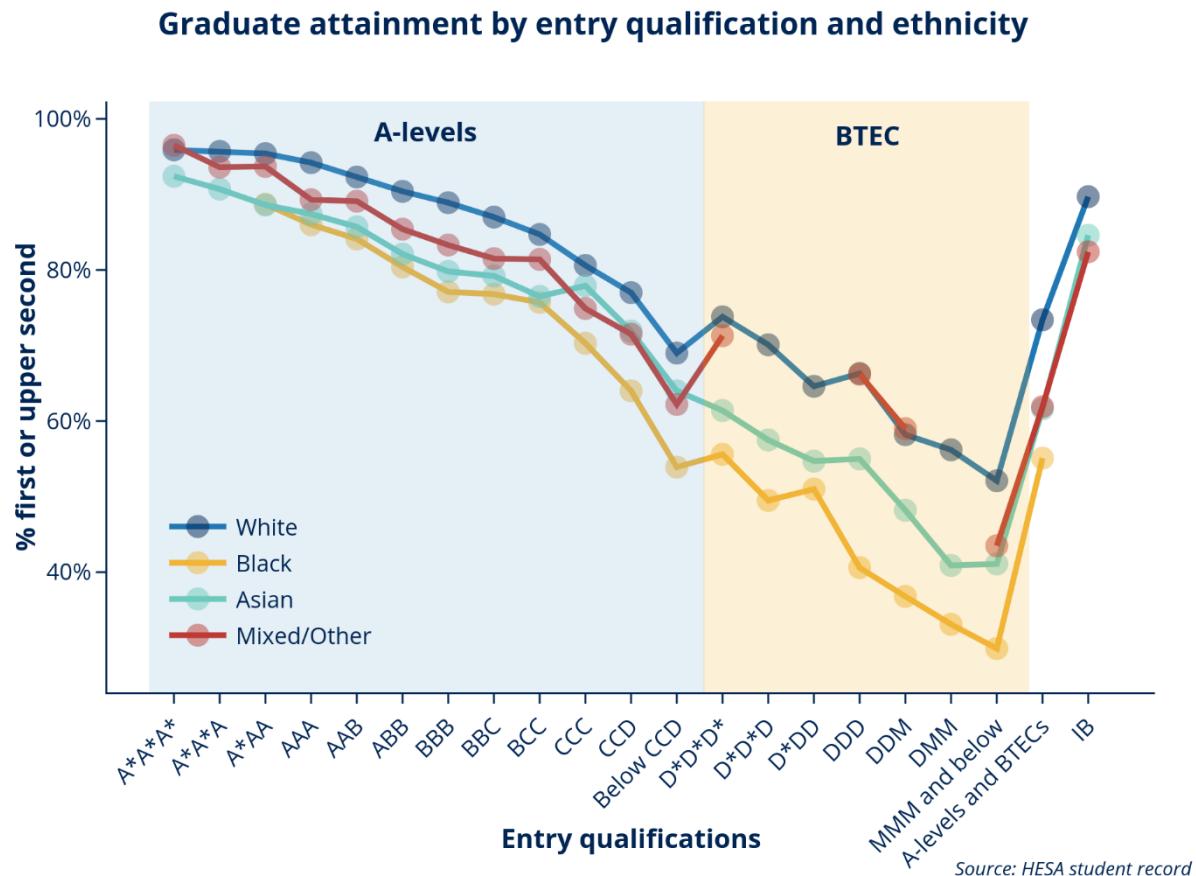


The gaps in access grow when continuation into second year is measured.

For those entering higher education in 2015-16 the non-continuation rate of young entrants from the lowest participation areas is 3.6 percentage points higher than the non-continuation rates of those from the highest participation areas

Ethnicity

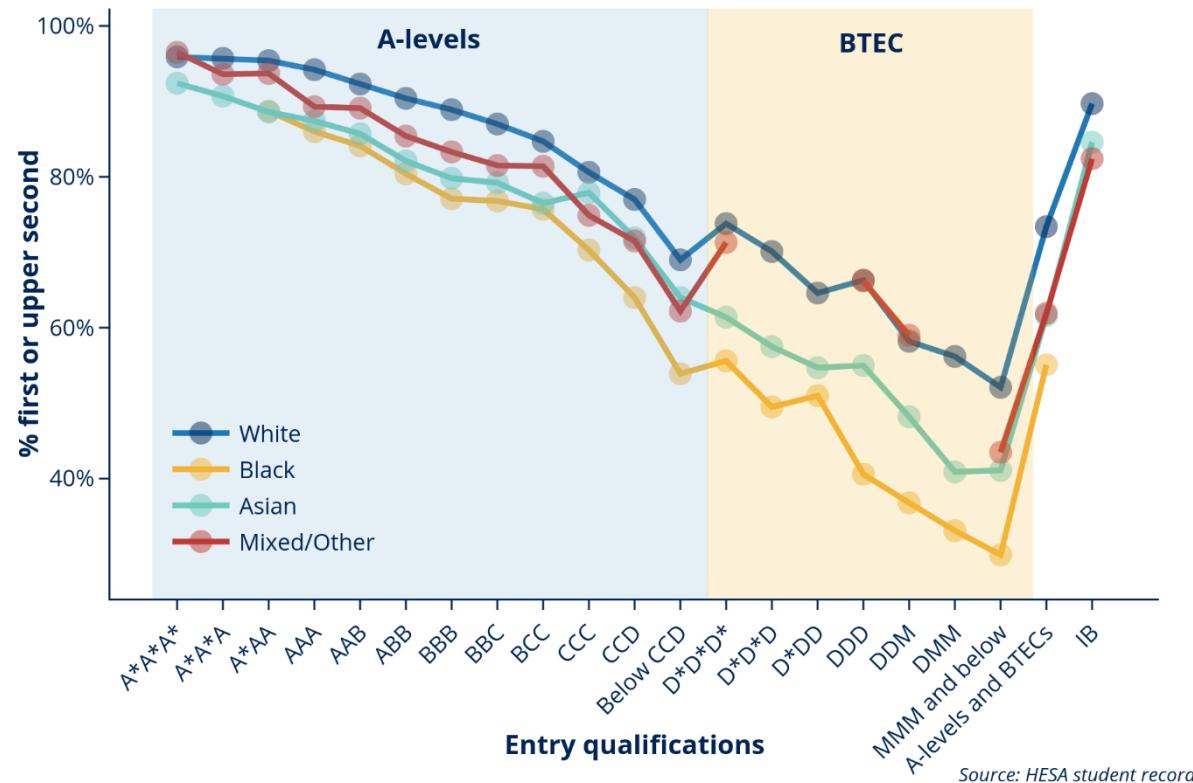
Success: degree outcomes – attainment gaps



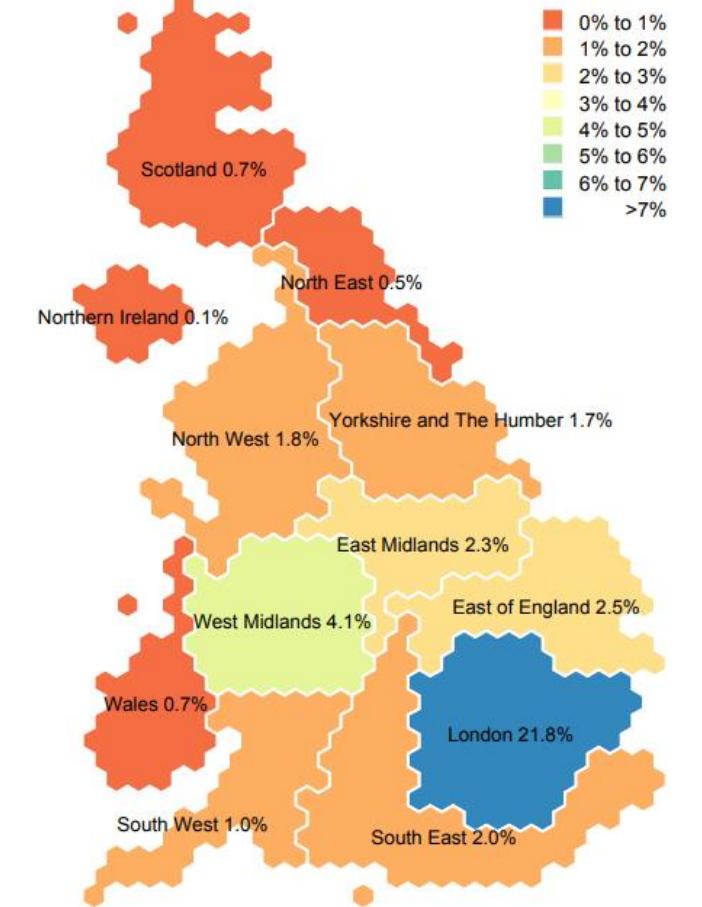
There is a 22 percentage point gap between black graduates and white graduates and this only reduces to 17 percentage points when other factors such as entry qualifications are considered.

Ethnicity of the population also varies by geography, and degree outcomes vary by ethnicity

Graduate attainment by entry qualification and ethnicity

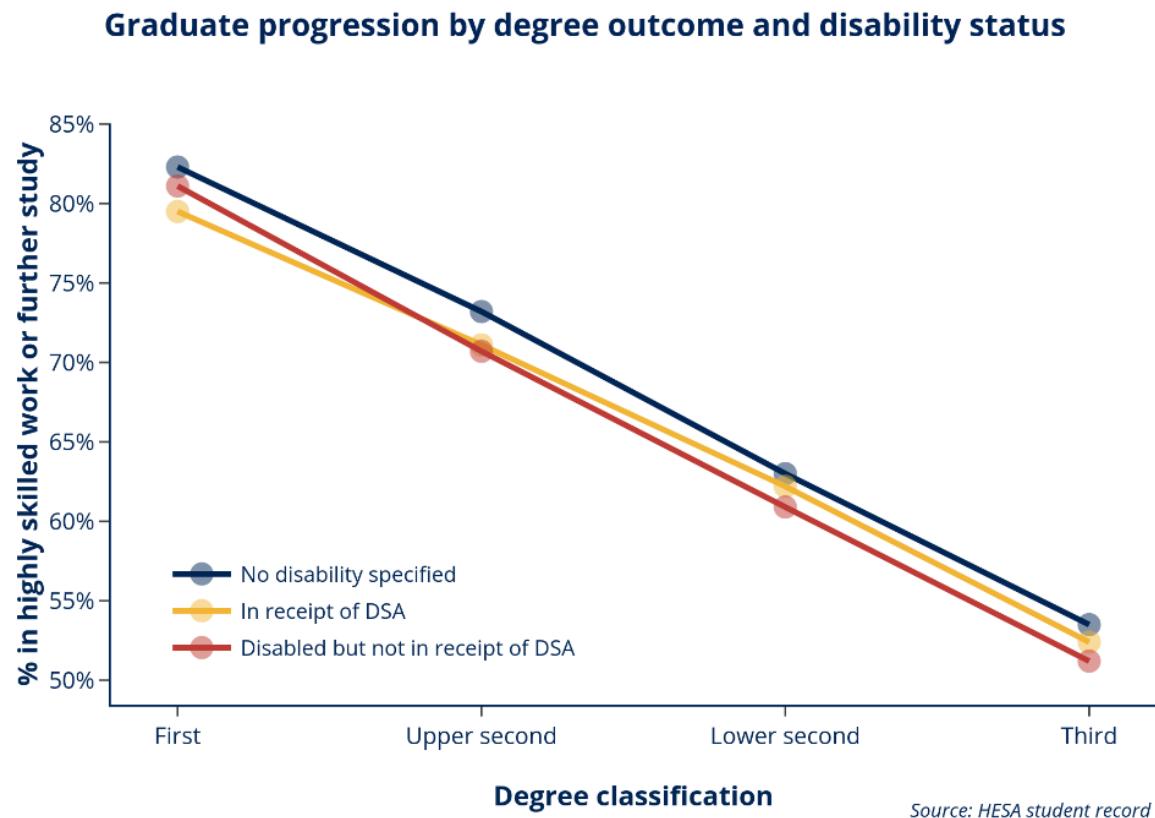


Proportion of the young population from the black ethnic group



Progression: employment outcomes

Disability

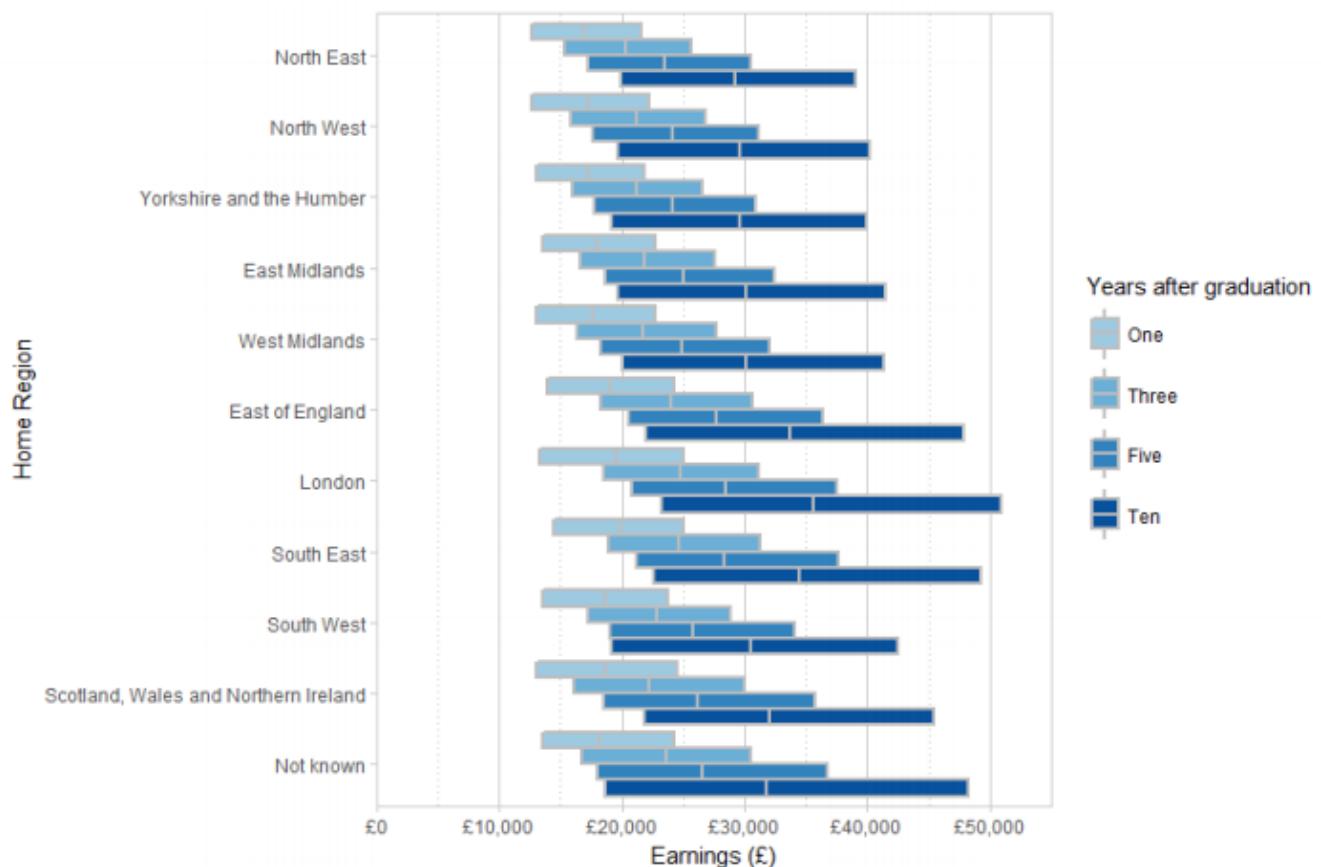


73.4% of graduates without a reported disability progressed to highly skilled work or further study compared to 70.6% of disabled graduates who are not in receipt of DSA.

This difference remains across degree classifications.

Graduate employment is also influenced by geography

Earnings of graduates by home region type: one, three, five and ten years after graduation



And earnings of
graduates vary by their
home region

Ten years after graduation
the median earnings of
graduates originally from
London are 20% higher
than graduates originally
from the North East

A new approach to regulating
access and participation in
English higher education

Areas of challenge in 19/20 APPs

- Self-assessment of performance across the lifecycle
- Actions to address identified gaps
- Rigorous use of evidence and evaluation
- Ambition for the future



The future of access and participation

We are aiming to:

- achieve **significant** reductions in the gaps in access, success and progression over the next five years; and
- ensure our access and participation regulation and funding are **outcome-based, risk-based, underpinned by evidence and joined up** with other OfS regulatory activities.

Pressure on individual universities and colleges

To demonstrate continuous, year-on-year improvement through access and participation plans to:

- Reduce the gaps in access, success and progression for underrepresented groups among their own students
- Improve practice, including through better evaluation and sustained engagement with schools from early years and with employers.

A risk and outcomes based approach:

- OfS can apply conditions where it identifies a higher level of risk to breach of this condition and it can refuse a plan

Sector-wide support

- Removing barriers to new providers and flexible provision
- Improving information, advice and guidance
- Availability and use of more common and rigorous data and evidence
- Collaborative working between higher education providers and with schools and employers
- Development and sharing of innovative and effective practice.

How to find out more

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Office for
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