

Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2017/18 to 2021/22



This publication presents a range of analysis regarding the numbers and characteristics of those enrolling and qualifying in Essential Skills in numeracy, literacy and information communication and technology (ICT) since 2017/18.

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| Feedback | As we want to engage with users of our statistics, we invite you to feedback your comments on this publication to: Email: jack.dougal@economy-ni.gov.uk Tel: 028 9025 7445 |

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Reader Information | 2 |
| Contents | 3 |
| List of Figures | 4 |
| Storyboard | 5 |
| About Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education) | 6 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| Structure | 7 |
| Policy and Operational Context | 7 |
| Explanatory Notes | 8 |
| Section A: Enrolments | 10 |
| <i>Enrolments and participants</i> | 10 |
| <i>Target level of study</i> | 11 |
| <i>What are the characteristics of those participating?</i> | 11 |
| Age..... | 11 |
| Sex..... | 12 |
| <i>Deprivation Analysis</i> | 13 |
| <i>What subjects are being studied?</i> | 13 |
| Subject and Age..... | 14 |
| Subject and Sex..... | 14 |
| <i>Where are the courses being studied?</i> | 15 |
| Section B: Qualifications issued | 16 |
| <i>Number of qualifications issued</i> | 16 |
| <i>Qualifications issued by level achieved</i> | 16 |
| <i>Qualifications issued by age band</i> | 17 |
| <i>Qualifications issued by sex</i> | 18 |
| <i>Qualifications issued by subject</i> | 19 |
| Section C: Performance | 20 |
| <i>Essential Skills performance</i> | 20 |
| <i>Performance by subject</i> | 20 |
| <i>Table A: Essential Skills performance indicators by subject since 2017/18</i> | 20 |
| <i>Performance by sex</i> | 21 |
| <i>Table B: Essential Skills performance indicators by sex since 2017/18</i> | 21 |
| <i>Performance by age band</i> | 21 |
| <i>Table C: Essential Skills retention rate by age band since 2017/18</i> | 21 |
| <i>Performance by target level of study</i> | 21 |
| <i>Table D: Essential Skills retention rate by target level since 2017/18</i> | 21 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Annexes | 22 |
| Annex 1: Tables | 22 |
| Table 1: Essential Skills enrolments and individuals by academic year..... | 22 |
| Table 2: Essential Skills enrolments by target level of study and academic year..... | 22 |
| Table 3: Essential Skills enrolments by age band and academic year..... | 22 |
| Table 4: Essential Skills enrolments by employment status and academic year..... | 23 |
| Table 5: Essential Skills enrolments by sex and academic year..... | 23 |
| Table 6: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintile and academic year..... | 23 |
| Table 7: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintile, subject and target level since 2017/18..... | 24 |
| Table 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year..... | 24 |
| Table 9: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age band since 2017/18..... | 25 |
| Table 10: Essential Skills enrolments by sex, subject and academic year..... | 25 |
| Table 11: Essential Skills enrolments by FE College, 2021/22..... | 25 |
| Table 12: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year..... | 26 |
| Table 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year..... | 26 |
| Table 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band and academic year..... | 26 |
| Table 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by sex and academic year..... | 26 |
| Table 16: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year..... | 27 |
| Table 17: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject, level achieved and academic year..... | 27 |
| Table 18: Essential Skills performance analysis by subject since 2017/18..... | 27 |
| Table 19: Essential Skills performance analysis by sex since 2017/18..... | 27 |
| Table 20: Essential Skills retention rate by age band since 2017/18..... | 28 |
| Table 21: Essential Skills retention rate by target level since 2017/18..... | 28 |
| Table 22: Essential Skills retention rate by target level in 2021/22..... | 28 |
| Annex 2: Definitions | 29 |
| Annex 3: Technical Notes | 31 |
| Further Enquiries | 32 |
| List of Figures | |
| Figure 1: Essential Skills enrolments and participants by academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 10 |
| Figure 2: Number of Essential Skills enrolments by target level and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 11 |
| Figure 3: Essential Skills enrolments by age band from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 12 |
| Figure 4: Essential Skills enrolments by sex and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 12 |
| Figure 5: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintile from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 13 |
| Figure 6: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 14 |
| Figure 7: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age since 2017/18 | 14 |
| Figure 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and sex since 2017/18 | 15 |
| Figure 9: Essential Skills enrolments by FE College, 2021/22 | 15 |
| Figure 10: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 16 |
| Figure 11: Percentage of Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved since 2017/18 | 17 |
| Figure 12: Number of Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 17 |
| Figure 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band since 2017/18 | 18 |
| Figure 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by sex and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22 | 18 |
| Figure 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22. | 19 |

Storyboard for Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2017/18 to 2021/22

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>There have been 133,026 enrolments in Essential Skills over the past five years.</p> | <p>Since 2017/18, 45,832 individuals have participated in 133,026 Essential Skills enrolments and achieved 80,489 qualifications (Tables 1 and 12).</p> |
| <p>After several years of decline, Essential Skills enrolments increased in 2021/22.</p> | <p>After several years of decline, the 2021/22 academic year saw increases in Essential Skills enrolments and participants. For a variety of reasons, including a dip in the 16-19-year-old population (the main age group taking Essential Skills), improvements in GCSE grades, and COVID-19 related grading arrangements/restrictions, the number of enrolments fell each year from 30,430 in 2017/18 to 23,825 in 2020/21, before increasing by 0.5% to 23,932 in 2021/22 (Table 1).</p> |
| <p>The annual number of qualifications issued has decreased in each of the past five years.</p> | <p>The number of qualifications issued in 2021/22 (13,513) was 26.5% lower than in 2017/18 (18,394), a larger percentage decrease than that for enrolments over the same period (21.4%; from 30,430 to 23,932) (Tables 1 and 12).</p> |
| <p>Two-thirds of enrolments in the past five years were from those aged 16-19.</p> | <p>Those aged 16-19 accounted for two-thirds (66.2%) of enrolments in the past five years, although their share fell to 60.0% in 2021/22; in contrast, the share of those aged 25 and over in 2021/22 (19.7%) was higher than its recent average (17.2%) (Table 3).</p> |
| <p>Males account for over half of enrolments...</p> | <p>Over the past five years, 56.8% of enrolments on Essential Skills courses have been from male students (Table 5).</p> |
| <p>...while a higher proportion of enrolments are from the most deprived areas.</p> | <p>Generally, the more deprived an area is, the higher the number of Essential Skills enrolments from those living in that area. Over the past five years, over half of enrolments (50.7%) have been from the two most deprived 'quintiles'. In 2021/22, 6,722 (28.1%) enrolments were from the most deprived quintile, while 2,323 (9.7%) were from the least deprived quintile (Table 6).</p> |
| <p>Although Numeracy remains the most popular subject, ICT overtook literacy in 2021/22...</p> | <p>From 2017/18 to 2020/21, Numeracy was the most popular subject (39.3%), while Literacy was second most popular (33.9%), followed by ICT (26.7%) (Table 8). Although numeracy remained the most popular subject in 2021/22, with 35.7% of enrolments, ICT (33.1%) overtook literacy (31.2%) (Table 8).</p> |
| <p>... however, this change hasn't yet been reflected in qualifications awarded.</p> | <p>Two in every three (66.6%) Essential Skills enrolments result in a qualification being issued. Numeracy accounted for 43.4% of qualifications issued in the most recent academic year, while a further third (32.9%) were in Literacy and 23.8% were in ICT (Tables 16 and 18).</p> |
| <p>Almost half of Essential Skills enrolments are at Level 2.</p> | <p>Almost half (49.7%) of Essential Skills qualifications issued since 2017/18 have been at Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grades A*-C), a further 32.4% at Level 1 and 17.4% at Entry Level (Table 13).</p> |

About Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education)

Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education) is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Further Education (FE) Colleges across Northern Ireland (NI) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Statistical information is collected routinely from a variety of electronic individual level administrative systems.

The Head of Branch is the Principal Statistician, Brian French. The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the Committee for the Economy, FE Colleges, universities, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within DfE, other educational organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations, as well as the general public.

The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on the performance of the Higher Education (HE) and FE sectors, other comparative performance exercises, target setting and monitoring, departmental research projects, development of service frameworks, as well as policy formulation and evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a high volume of ad hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through several key statistical publications, including:

- Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes;
- Further Education Sector Activity;
- Higher Education Institution Enrolments;
- Higher Education Institution Qualifications.

A detailed list of these publications is available from:
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistics-publication-schedule>

An Official Statistics Publication

The statistics within this bulletin have been compiled in accordance with Official Statistics guidelines. They aim to meet identified user needs; are accessible and explained; are produced in accordance with sound methods; and are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Further information on the Code of Practice for Statistics is available at:
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/>

Further information on the DfE Statement of Compliance in relation to the 'Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order (Northern Ireland) 2009 is available at:
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statement-compliance>

Introduction

The then Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) launched the Essential Skills for Living Strategy and action plan in April 2002. The Strategy aims to improve adult literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Northern Ireland. Essential Skills courses, which are funded by DfE, are free to participants and delivered by accredited tutors working in Further Education (FE) Colleges, private training providers and community organisations.

This statistical bulletin, produced by DfE's Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education), analyses enrolments, qualifications and performance rates for Essential Skills over the most recent five years of the Strategy.

Structure

The bulletin is divided into three sections:

- Section A details Essential Skills enrolments;
- Section B focuses on Essential Skills qualifications;
- Section C details the performance rates (retention, achievement and success) for Essential Skills provision.

Policy and Operational Context

The Department for the Economy is responsible for formulating policy and administering funding to support skills, tertiary education, training and apprenticeships in Northern Ireland.

It is within this context that the Essential Skills for Living Strategy has been designed to improve levels of Numeracy, Literacy and ICT in Northern Ireland. The vision for the delivery of the Essential Skills Strategy is:

“to provide opportunities for adults to update their Essential Skills to assist them in improving their overall quality of life, their personal development and their employment opportunities and by so doing to promote greater economic development, social inclusion and cohesion”.

The curriculum standards for the Essential Skills of Application of Number (Numeracy) and Communication (Literacy) were refreshed and published in 2016, for first teaching from September 2016. The purpose of the refresh was to update the standards and to make them more suitable for a wider cohort of learners. The assessment methodology was also reviewed and developed to include an external end point assessment model for Literacy and Numeracy at levels 1 and 2. The purpose of this change was to increase the rigour of the assessment methodology in the light of Northern Ireland's position in international studies of literacy and numeracy.

Explanatory Notes

This statistical release is the thirteenth in an annual series presenting information on Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland.

Previous returns have analysed the entire history of the programme (beginning in academic year 2002/03). This is the first where (in line with other publications regarding the FE sector) the scope is limited to the most recent five academic years.

Definitions of the terms used within the report, as well as more information on the methodology used to produce the statistics, can be found in the Annexes.

Data Collection

The information presented in this bulletin derives from a series of statistical returns listed below:

- Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for the years 2017/18 to 2021/22;
- Essential Skills enrolment extract from the Client Management System (CMS) for the years 2017/18 to 2021/22;
- Essential Skills Qualifications Return for the years 2017/18 to 2021/22.

The enrolment data returns are merged and a process is in place to deal with any duplicate enrolments. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of enrolments.

Supplementary Tables

Detailed Supplementary Tables are available on the DfE web page:
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/essential-skills-enrolments-and-outcomes>

Rounding

Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place; as a result, some percentages may not sum to 100. Determining the percentage point(s) difference may not equate to the difference between two percentages due to rounding.

Data Quality

All information presented in this bulletin in respect of the CDR has been validated and quality assured by FE Colleges prior to publication. Following submission, this Branch performs a series of validation checks, with any issues being presented to the FE Colleges for clarification or amendment as necessary. Validations are also run for training programme enrolment data, although, due to the time taken for the amendments to be administered within the training programme dataset, the bulletin is published prior to receiving the amended data. As such, any amendments are reflected in future publications.

While awarding organisations conduct internal audits and quality assurance checks on the data, data are also checked and validated by this Branch at each quarterly return. Any errors are fed back to the appropriate awarding organisation for amendment.

Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are: to monitor Essential Skills activity; to help assess Essential Skills performance; to facilitate corporate monitoring; to inform and monitor related Essential Skills policy; and to respond to NI Assembly questions and ad hoc queries from the public.

Who will be interested?

The information presented in this statistical bulletin will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example, the statistics are used by DfE policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Economy Minister to discharge their duties; by the NI Assembly's Committee for the Economy to scrutinise the Essential Skills sector; by other government departments, such as the Department of Education; by local businesses to quantify the supply of those qualifying in their business area; by prospective students to inform their choices around Essential Skills courses; and by researchers and academics to try and understand the underlying trends in Essential Skills.

Essential Skills statistics published elsewhere

Essential Skills qualifications statistics are also published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). These quarterly bulletins can be found at: <https://ccea.org.uk/regulation/reports-statistics/technical-and-professional-qualification-bulletins>. Due to differences in the way qualifications are reported to and classified by Ofqual, the statistics reported by CCEA may not be comparable with the figures in this publication.

Comparing levels of qualifications

Within Essential Skills for 'Literacy' and 'Numeracy', individuals can obtain qualifications at 5 different levels: Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2. Essential Skills Information Communication and Technology (ICT) courses are only available at Level 1 and Level 2. For further information on comparing qualifications across the UK, Ireland and overseas, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>.

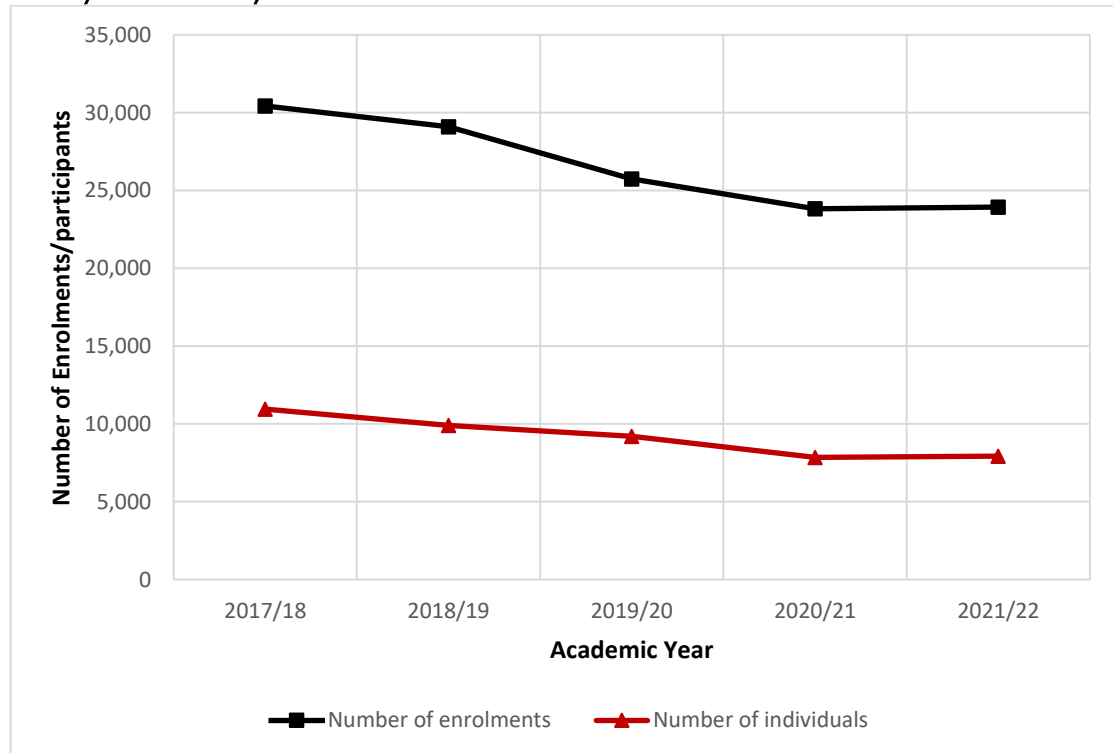
Section A: Enrolments

Enrolments and participants

Since 2017/18, 45,832 individuals have participated in 133,026 Essential Skills and achieved 80,489 qualifications (Tables 1 and 12).

After several years of decline, the 2021/22 academic year saw increases in Essential Skills enrolments and participants. For a variety of reasons, including a dip in the 16-19-year-old population (the main age group taking Essential Skills), incremental improvements in GCSE grades and COVID-19 related grading arrangements and restrictions, the number of enrolments fell each year from 30,430 in 2017/18 to 23,825 in 2020/21, before increasing by 0.5% to 23,932 in 2021/22 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Figure 1: Essential Skills enrolments and participants by academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22



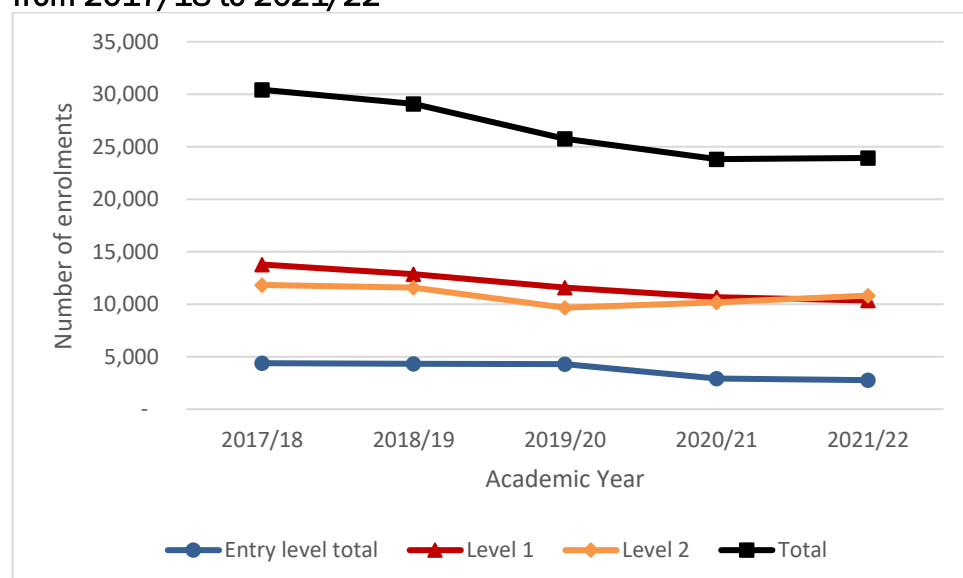
Target level of study

Over the five-year period 2017/18 to 2021/22, the highest proportion of enrolments has been at target Level 1 (44.5%); however, in the most recent year (2021/22), Level 2 enrolments (45.2%) overtook Level 1 enrolments (43.3%).

The most recent academic year saw the continuation of an increasing proportion of enrolments at target Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grade A*-C). Level 2 increased from 42.8% in 2020/21 to 45.2% in 2021/22. Inversely, the proportion of Entry Level enrolments decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 11.6% in 2021/22 (Table 2).

Entry level enrolments have seen incremental decreases every year since academic year 2017/18. Similarly, enrolments at Level 1 have decreased in number in each year within this bulletin's scope, from 13,782 in 2017/18 to 10,354 in 2021/22. Although Level 2 Enrolments decreased between 2017/18 and 2019/20 (from 11,835 to 9,670), they have increased in the last two academic years (to 10,808). The overall increase in Essential Skills enrolments is entirely as a result of the Level 2 increase, as all enrolments of any other level have decreased in the past year (Figure 2 and Table 2).

Figure 2: Number of Essential Skills enrolments by target level and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22



What are the characteristics of those participating?

Age

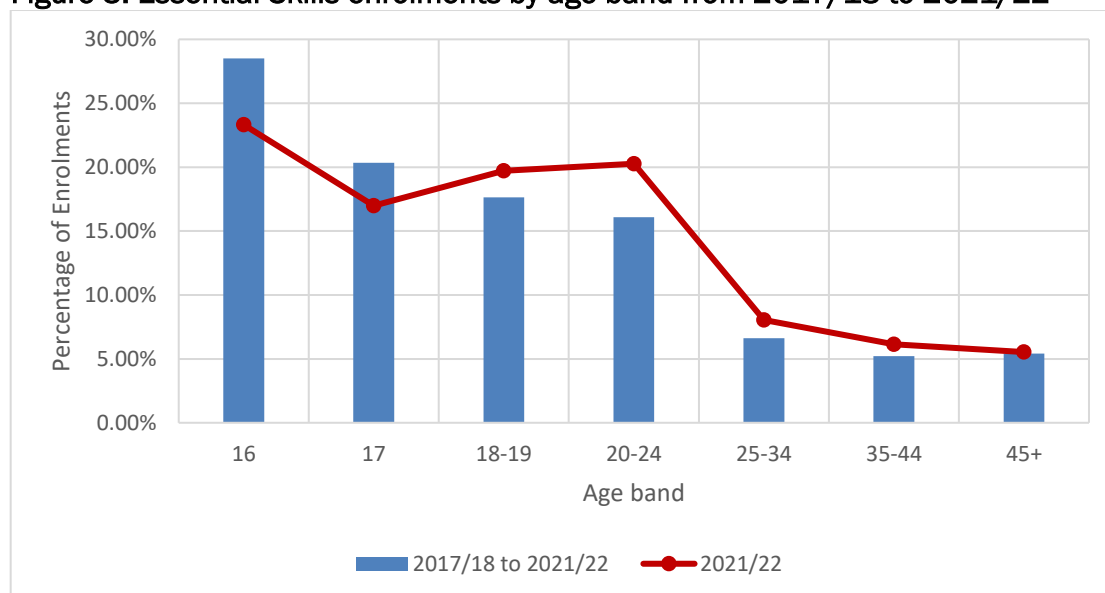
Over the five-year period 2017/18 to 2021/22, typically more than a quarter of enrolments (28.5%) were from 16-year-olds. However, this proportion dipped to 23.3% in 2021/22.

Those aged 25 and over have accounted for 17.2% of enrolments over the last five years, although their enrolment share expanded to 19.7% in 2021/22.

However, it is notable that this “expansion” does not account for a higher number of enrolments in 2021/22 (4,717) than the 2017/18 over-25 enrolments (5,143).

The last few years have seen increases in performance at GCSE level, which could partially explain the decreasing participation of younger age groups.

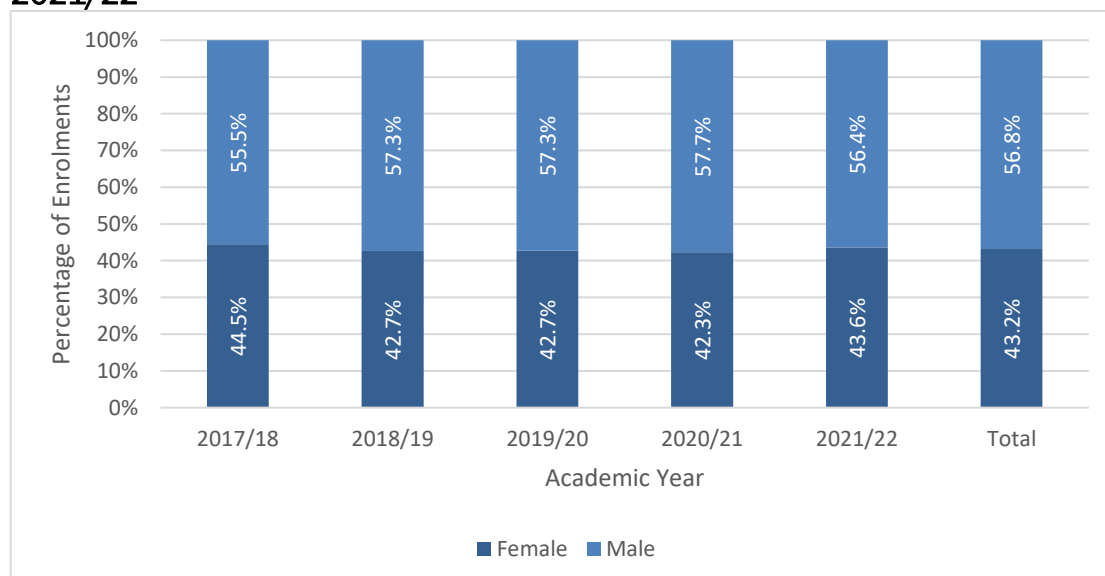
Figure 3: Essential Skills enrolments by age band from 2017/18 to 2021/22



Sex

Over the five-year period 2017/18 to 2021/22, the majority (56.8%) of enrolments on Essential Skills courses have been from male students, including 56.4% (13,497) in the most recent academic year (Figure 4 and Table 5).

Figure 4: Essential Skills enrolments by sex and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22

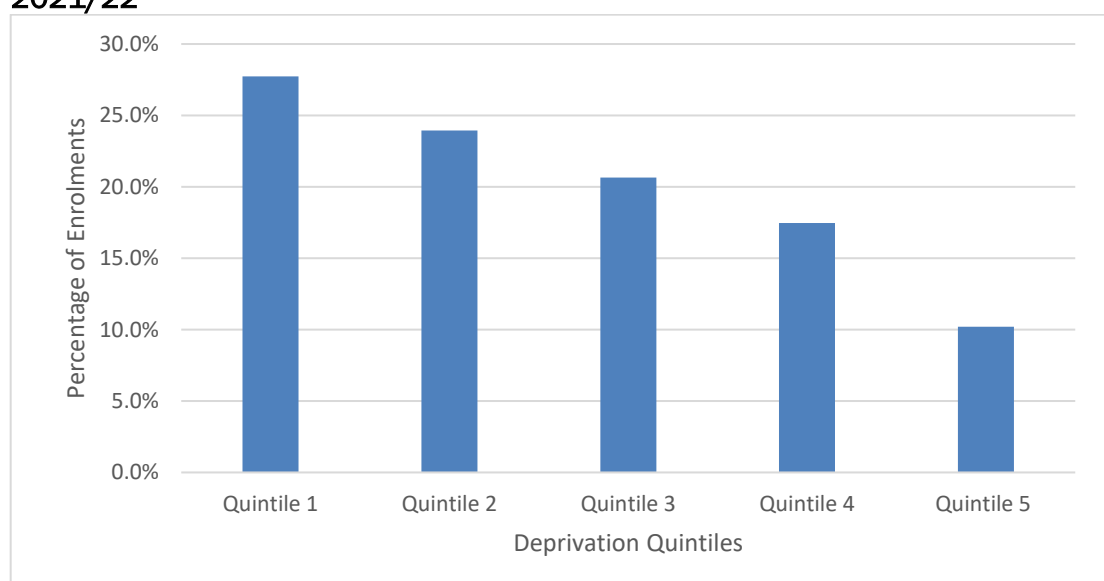


Deprivation Analysis

Relative deprivation is measured by the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM), which can be used to categorise Northern Ireland's 890 Super Output Areas (SOAs) into five equally sized groups, termed 'quintiles'. Quintile 1 is the most deprived group of areas and Quintile 5 is the least deprived group of areas.

Generally, the more deprived an area is, the higher the number of Essential Skills enrolments from those living in that area. Excluding enrolments with invalid or unknown postcodes, over the last five years of the Strategy, just over half of enrolments (51.7%) have been from the two most deprived quintiles, with the largest share (27.7%) being from Quintile 1 (Figure 5 and Table 6).

Figure 5: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintile from 2017/18 to 2021/22



In the most recent academic year, 28.7% (6,722) of enrolments with a valid postcode were from the most deprived quintile, whereas 9.9% (2,323) were from the least deprived quintile (Table 6).

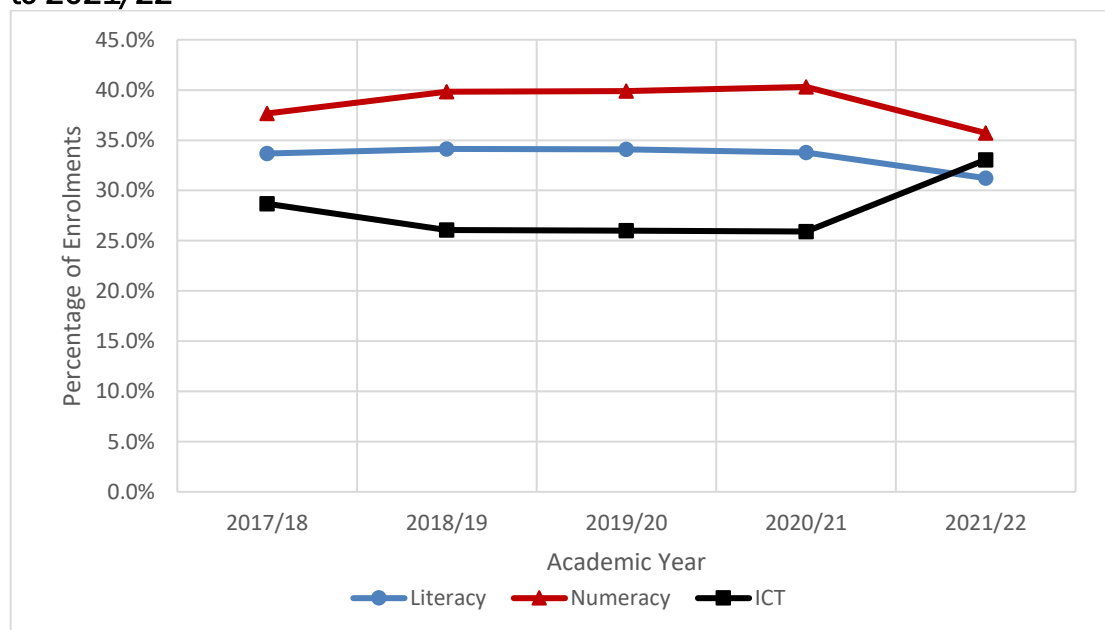
Over the last five years of the Essential Skills Strategy, those living in Quintile 1 have accounted for 34.1% of Entry Level, 28.5% of Level 1 and 24.5% of Level 2 enrolments with a valid postcode. With regard to subject, 29.0% of Literacy and 28.7% of Numeracy enrolments have been from the most deprived quintile, while the proportion of ICT enrolments has been lower, at 24.8% (Table 7).

What subjects are being studied?

As a proportion of Essential Skills enrolments, Numeracy accounted for 35.7%, Literacy for 31.2% and ICT for 33.1% in the most recent academic year (2021/22) (Figure 6 and Table 8).

Although the proportion of ICT enrolments increased in net terms between 2017/18 (28.7%) and 2021/22 (33.1%), the number of such enrolments fell from 8,726 to 7,911 over this period (Figure 6 and Table 8).

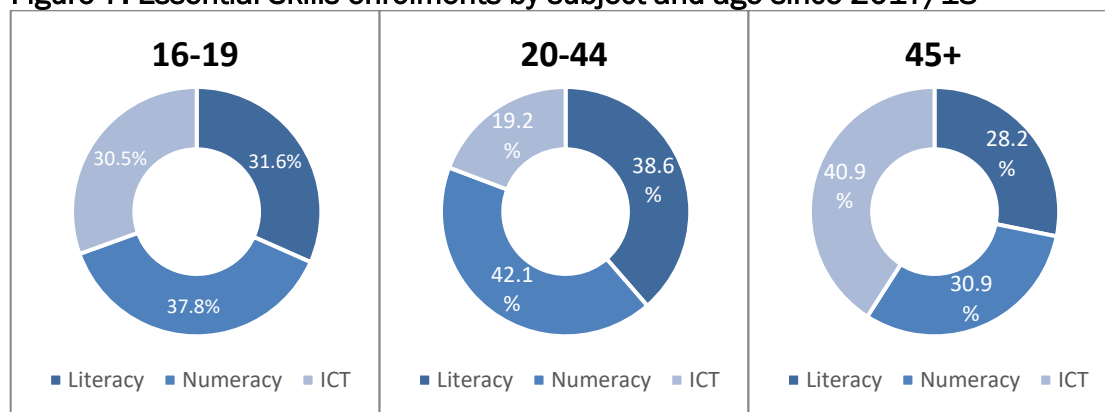
Figure 6: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22



Subject and Age

Over the last five years of the Essential Skills Strategy, Numeracy has been the most popular subject choice among those aged 16-19 (37.8%), as well as among 20-44-year-olds (42.1%). For those aged 45+, the most common subject studied has been ICT, accounting for 40.9% (Figure 7 and Table 9).

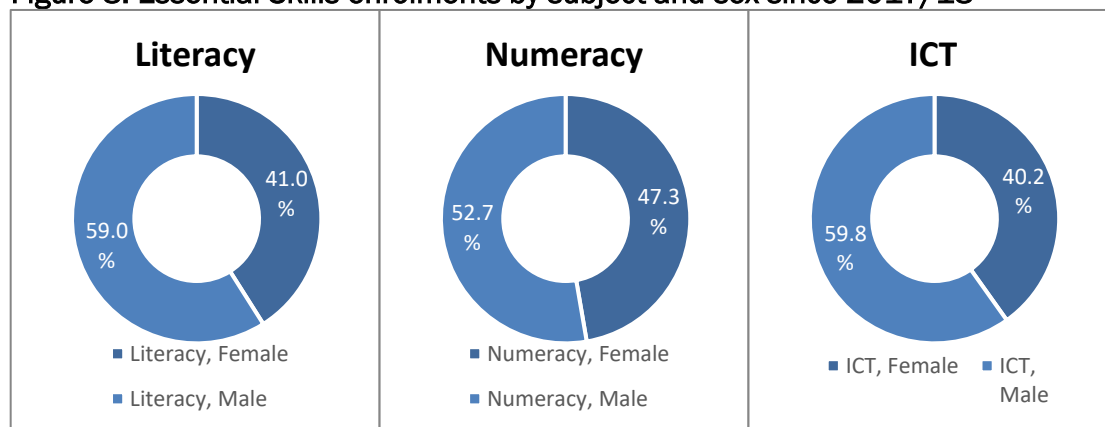
Figure 7: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age since 2017/18



Subject and Sex

Males account for higher proportions of Essential Skills enrolments across all three subjects, ranging from 52.7% in Numeracy to 59.8% in Literacy (Figure 8 and Table 10).

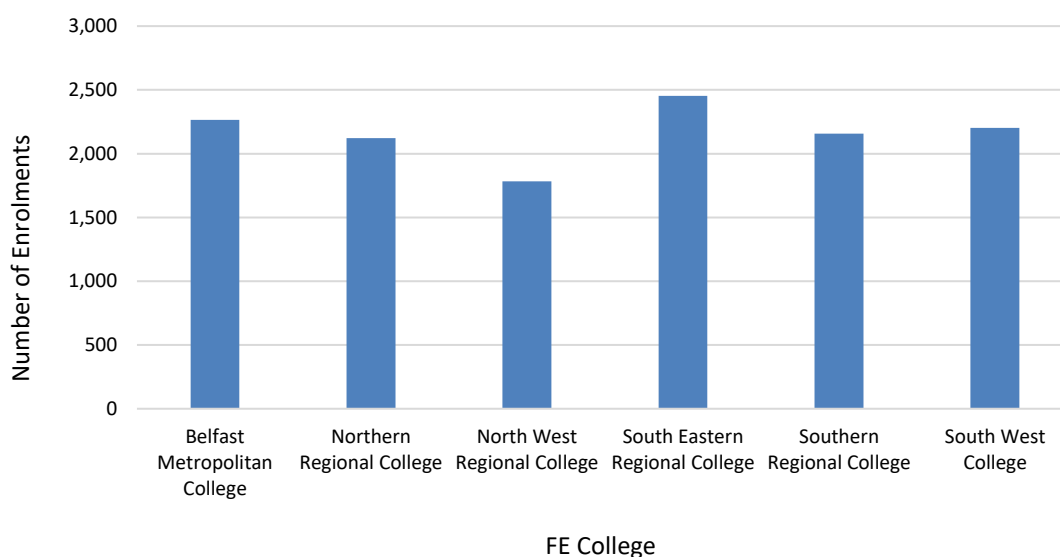
Figure 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and sex since 2017/18



Where are the courses being studied?

In 2021/22, over half (54.2%, 12,982) of Essential Skills enrolments occurred within FE Colleges, ranging from 1,783 at North West Regional College to 2,453 at South Eastern Regional College (Figure 9 and Table 11).

Figure 9: Essential Skills enrolments by FE College, 2021/22



In 2021/22, 13,357 Essential Skills enrolments were taken as part of DfE’s Training Programmes. It should be noted that, as a substantial number of these enrolments are delivered at FE Colleges, the sum of FE College enrolments and DfE Training Programme enrolments is greater than the actual number of Essential Skills enrolments.

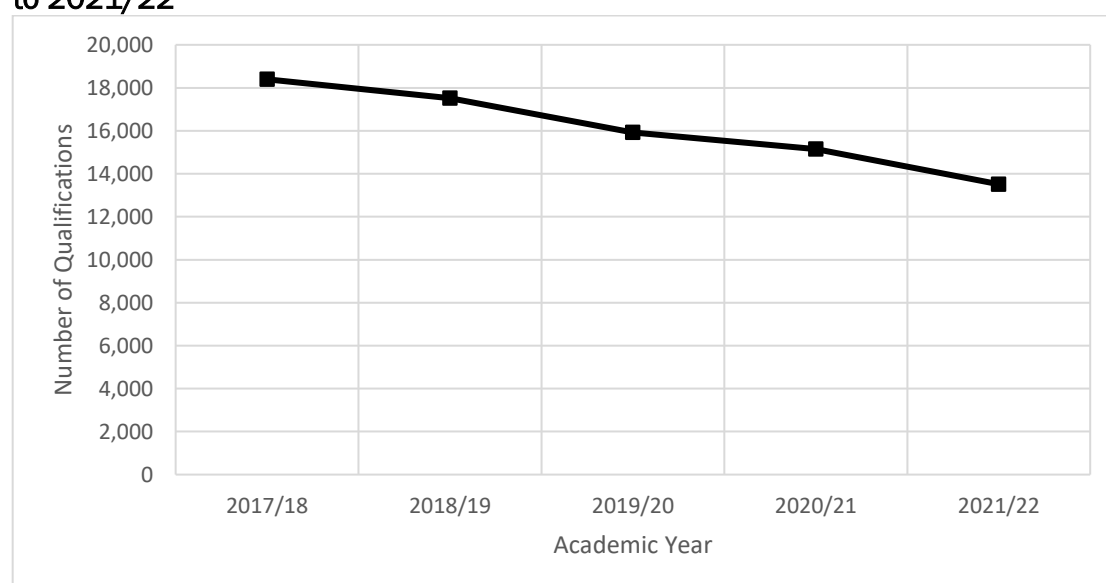
Section B: Qualifications issued

Number of qualifications issued

Over the past five academic years, the number of Essential Skills qualifications awarded has decreased annually, including a 10.8% decrease from 15,149 in 2020/21 to 13,513 in 2021/22 (Figure 10 and Table 12).

Under the instruction of the Minister for the Economy, exceptional arrangements for assessing and awarding Essential Skills were put in place from March 2020 to July 2020, and again from February 2021 to the end of the 2020/21 academic year. This approach was designed to enable students to progress as planned, despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 10: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22



Qualifications issued by level achieved

Over the past five academic years, Essential Skills enrolments are most likely to have been at Level 1 (44.5%), followed by 40.7% at Level 2. In contrast, almost half (49.7%) of qualifications awarded have been at Level 2, with Level 1 accounting for 32.9% of awards. This indicates that many students have qualified at a higher level than the target level they initially enrolled at (Table 13).

Level 2 qualifications accounted for 49.9% of the qualifications issued in 2021/22, down from 54.0% in 2020/21. In contrast, the share of Entry Level qualifications increased by 2.8 percentage points between 2020/21 (12.8%) and 2021/22 (15.6%), while the Level 1 share increased from 33.2% to 34.4% (Figure 11 and Table 13).

Figure 11: Percentage of Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved since 2017/18

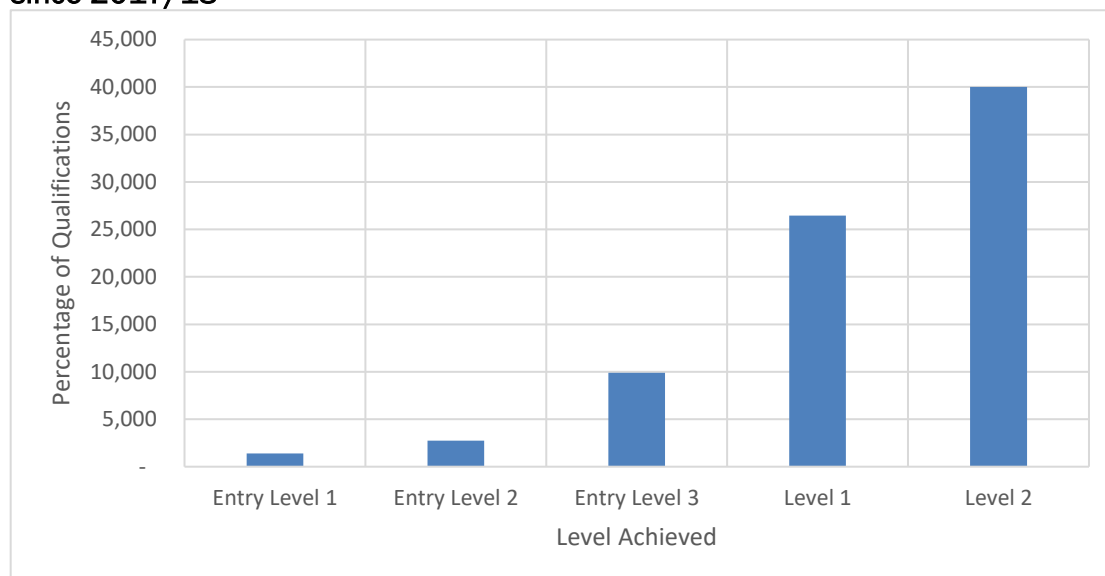
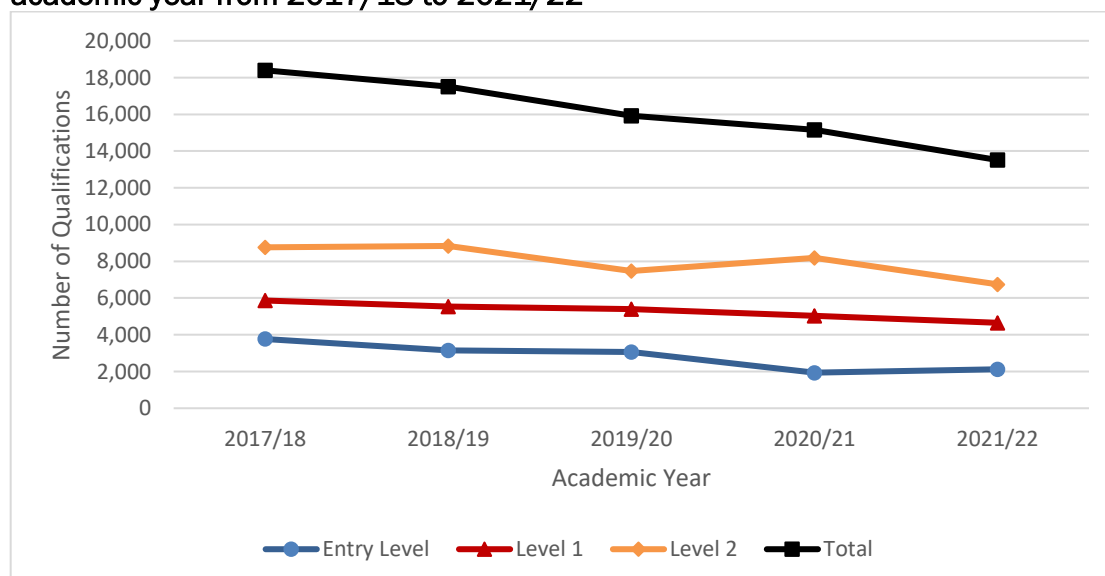


Figure 12 (below) shows that, of the 13,513 qualifications issued in 2021/22, 2,114 were at Entry Level, 4,653 at Level 1 and 6,746 at Level 2. While the Level 2 and Level 1 figures represent a decrease from 2020/21, the number of Entry Level qualifications issued increased by 176 (Figure 12 and Table 13).

Figure 12: Number of Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22



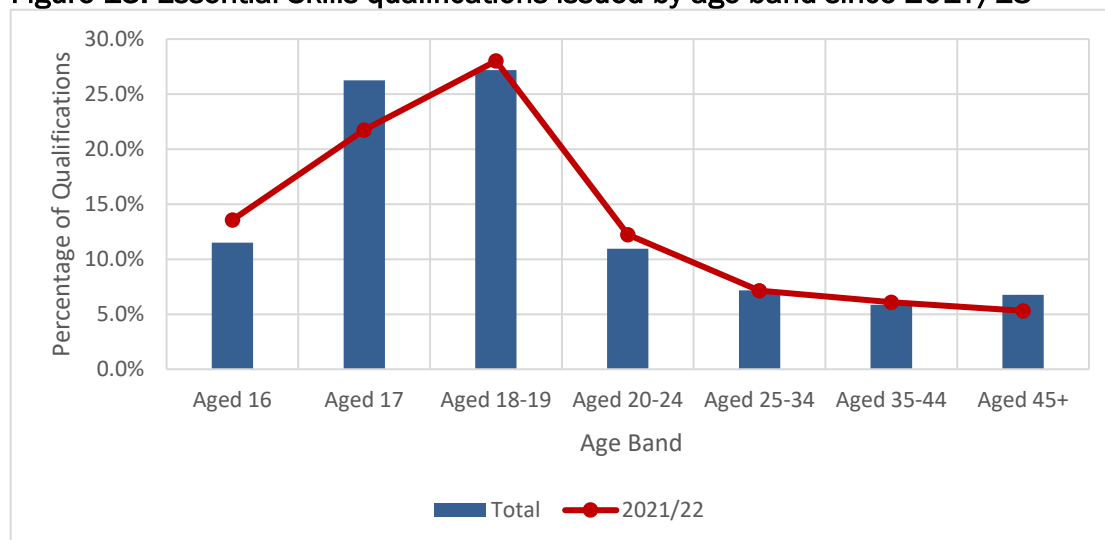
Qualifications issued by age band

Over the most recent five years, similar to the pattern of enrolments, the majority (64.9%) of qualifications have been issued to those between the ages of 16 and 19, with 17-year-olds alone accounting for 26.3%. The respective figures for the most recent academic year were 63.3% and 21.7% (Figure 13).

The past five years of the strategy have seen students aged 25 and over account for just under a fifth (19.8%) of qualifications issued (Figure 13 and Table 14).

Note: Differences in the way age is calculated for enrolments and qualifications are explained in Annex 2.

Figure 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band since 2017/18

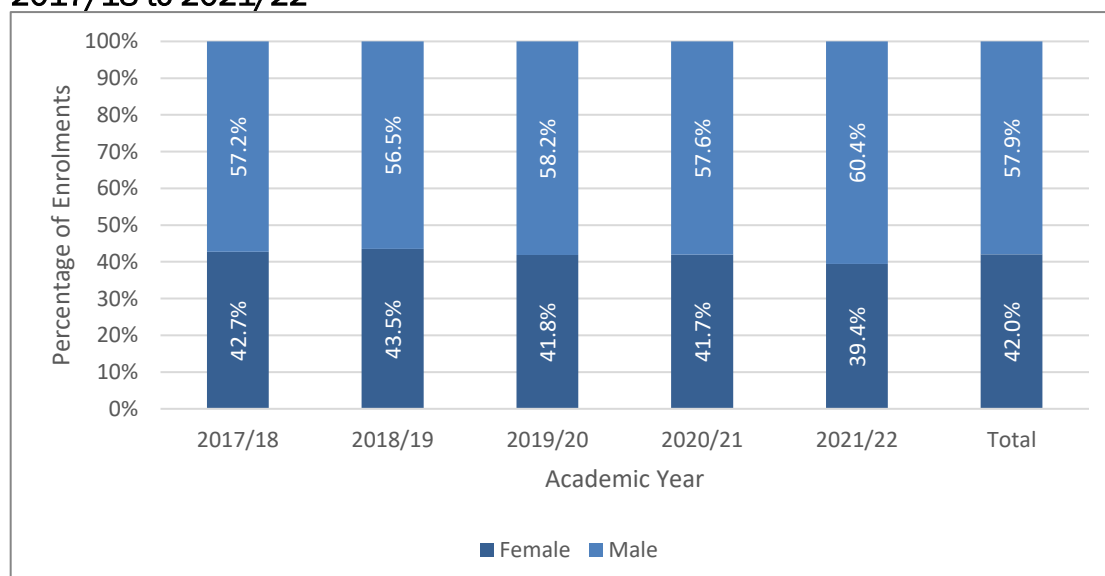


Qualifications issued by sex

In each of the past five academic years, as illustrated in Figure 14, males have accounted for the majority of those gaining an Essential Skills qualification, ranging from a low of 56.5% in 2018/19 to a high of 60.5% in 2021/22.

In 2021/22, males gained 8,166 (60.5%) Essential Skills qualifications, with females gaining 5,323 (39.5%). The average share of qualifications over the past five years was 58.0% male and 42.0% female (Figure 14 and Table 15).

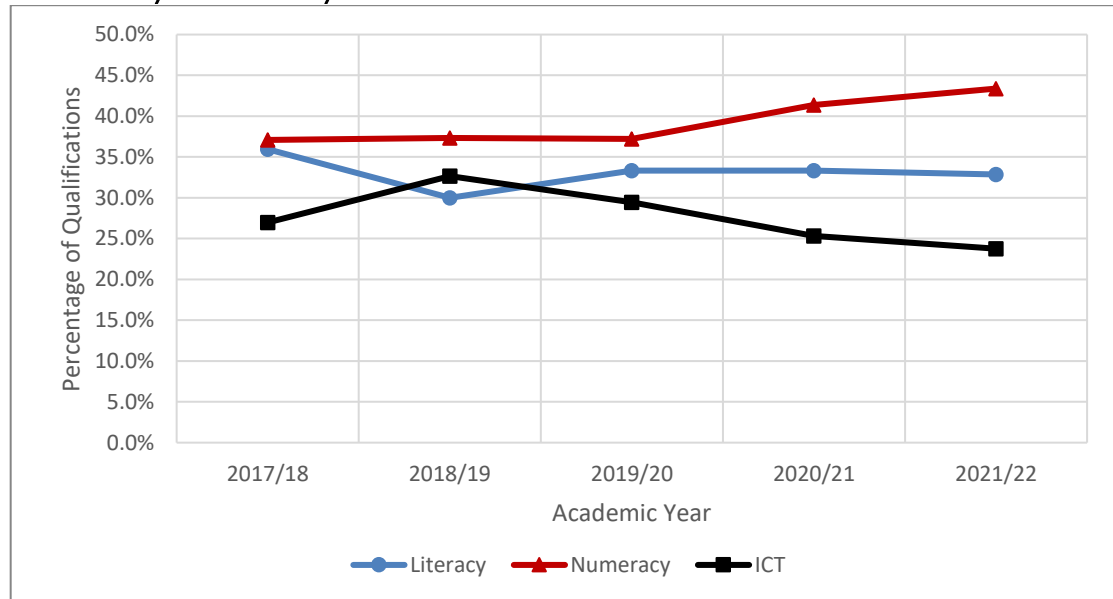
Figure 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by sex and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22



Qualifications issued by subject

As illustrated in Figure 15, Literacy accounted for just under a third (32.9%) of qualifications issued in 2021/22, slightly lower than the proportion in 2020/21 (33.3%). The share of ICT qualifications issued in 2021/22 was 23.8%, its lowest proportion of the most recent five years. Numeracy accounted for the remaining 43.4%, its highest proportion of the five-year period (Figure 15 and Table 16).

Figure 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year from 2017/18 to 2021/22.



Section C: Performance

Performance can be measured across three indicators:

- **Retention rate** is defined as the percentage of enrolments completed by students.
- **Achievement rate** is defined as the percentage of enrolments completed by students who achieve a qualification.
- **Success rate** is the overall measure of performance, which is the percentage of enrolments of students who complete and achieve a qualification.

Further details on how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated can be found in Annex 2. No individual academic year figures are presented within performance analysis, as explained in technical note 9 (Annex 3).

Essential Skills performance

Over the past five years of the Strategy, the retention rate within Essential Skills courses has been 91.4%, the achievement rate has been 66.6%, while the success rate has been 60.9%. Therefore, two in every three completed Essential Skills enrolments result in a qualification being issued (Table A).

Performance by subject

The retention rate has ranged from 90.5% in Numeracy to 92.2% in ICT, while the achievement rate has ranged from 65.7% in Literacy to 68.0% in Numeracy.

The success rates for all three subjects are narrowly spread, with Literacy having 60.3%, ICT having 60.7% and Numeracy having a rate of 61.5%.

Table A: Essential Skills performance indicators by subject since 2017/18

| Subject | Retention rate | Achievement rate | Success rate |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Literacy | 91.7% | 65.7% | 60.3% |
| Numeracy | 90.5% | 68.0% | 61.5% |
| ICT | 92.2% | 65.8% | 60.7% |
| Total | 91.4% | 66.6% | 60.9% |

Performance by sex

Over the past five years, males have had higher retention, achievement and success rates than females. The average achievement rate saw the narrowest gap between the sexes, at 0.8% (66.8% for males; 66.0% for females), while the largest difference (3.4%) related to the retention rate (92.9% for males; 89.5% for females) (Table B and Table 19).

Table B: Essential Skills performance indicators by sex since 2017/18

| Sex | Retention rate | Achievement rate | Success rate |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Female | 89.5% | 66.0% | 59.1% |
| Male | 92.9% | 66.8% | 62.0% |
| Total | 91.4% | 66.6% | 60.9% |

Performance by age band

The retention rate generally decreases as age band of participant increases, with those aged 16 having the highest retention rate (92.6%) and those aged 45+ having the lowest (88.1%) (Table C and Table 20). Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by age band due to differences in the way age is calculated for enrolments and qualifications (see Annex 2).

Table C: Essential Skills retention rate by age band since 2017/18

| Age Band | Retention rate |
|--------------|----------------|
| 16 | 92.6% |
| 17 | 90.9% |
| 18-19 | 89.6% |
| 20-24 | 94.9% |
| 25-34 | 88.7% |
| 35-44 | 89.0% |
| 45+ | 88.1% |
| Total | 91.4% |

Performance by target level of study

Across the five levels of study, the retention rate has ranged from 88.8% at Entry Level 3 to 92.3% at Level 1 over the past five years (Table D and Table 21).

Note: Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by level, as students may qualify at a different level to the target level at which they enrolled.

Table D: Essential Skills retention rate by target level since 2017/18

| Target Level | Retention rate |
|---------------|----------------|
| Entry Level 1 | 91.6% |
| Entry Level 2 | 89.6% |
| Entry Level 3 | 88.8% |
| Level 1 | 92.3% |
| Level 2 | 92.2% |
| Total | 91.4% |

Annexes

Annex 1: Tables

Table 1: Essential Skills enrolments and individuals by academic year

| Academic Year | Number of enrolments | Number of individuals |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2017/18 | 30,430 | 10,951 |
| 2018/19 | 29,087 | 9,896 |
| 2019/20 | 25,752 | 9,207 |
| 2020/21 | 23,825 | 7,850 |
| 2021/22 | 23,932 | 7,928 |
| Total | 133,026 | 45,832 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Individual students are determined using name and date of birth, and allocated to a particular academic year based on the start date of their first registration. Individuals can enrol in more than one course.

Table 2: Essential Skills enrolments by target level of study and academic year

| Academic Year | Entry Level 1 | Entry Level 2 | Entry Level 3 | Level 1 | Level 2 | Not Known | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| 2017/18 | 419 | 1,007 | 2,956 | 13,782 | 11,835 | 431 | 30,430 |
| 2018/19 | 320 | 978 | 3,028 | 12,862 | 11,585 | 314 | 29,087 |
| 2019/20 | 341 | 984 | 2,965 | 11,581 | 9,670 | 211 | 25,752 |
| 2020/21 | 146 | 667 | 2,094 | 10,669 | 10,191 | 58 | 23,825 |
| 2021/22 | 126 | 661 | 1,980 | 10,354 | 10,808 | 3 | 23,932 |
| Total | 1,352 | 4,297 | 13,023 | 59,248 | 54,089 | 1,017 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 3: Essential Skills enrolments by age band and academic year

| Academic Year | Aged 16 | Aged 17 | Aged 18-19 | Aged 20-24 | Aged 25-34 | Aged 35-44 | Aged 45+ | Unknown | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| 2017/18 | 8,949 | 6,429 | 5,152 | 4,523 | 1,926 | 1,475 | 1,742 | 234 | 30,430 |
| 2018/19 | 8,324 | 5,978 | 5,058 | 4,548 | 1,971 | 1,561 | 1,642 | 5 | 29,087 |
| 2019/20 | 8,543 | 5,584 | 4,309 | 3,272 | 1,421 | 1,204 | 1,415 | 4 | 25,752 |
| 2020/21 | 6,537 | 5,020 | 4,221 | 4,198 | 1,547 | 1,221 | 1,077 | 4 | 23,825 |
| 2021/22 | 5,580 | 4,063 | 4,720 | 4,849 | 1,923 | 1,470 | 1,324 | 3 | 23,932 |
| Total | 37,933 | 27,074 | 23,460 | 21,390 | 8,788 | 6,931 | 7,200 | 250 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14h October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Age is calculated based on date of birth and start date of the enrolment.

Table 4: Essential Skills enrolments by employment status and academic year

| Academic Year | Employed | Unemployed | Economically inactive | Unknown | Total |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2016/17 | 12,068 | 7,354 | 11,147 | 2,067 | 32,636 |
| 2017/18 | 9,269 | 7,123 | 11,723 | 2,314 | 30,429 |
| 2018/19 | 8,384 | 2,280 | 13,821 | 4,594 | 29,079 |
| 2019/20 | 5,934 | 1,865 | 13,187 | 5,037 | 26,023 |
| 2020/21 | 4,597 | 893 | 8,707 | 9,811 | 24,008 |
| Total | 183,737 | 125,642 | 208,715 | 90,300 | 608,394 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 15th October 2021; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 5: Essential Skills enrolments by sex and academic year

| Academic Year | Female | Male | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2017/18 | 13,546 | 16,884 | 30,430 |
| 2018/19 | 12,412 | 16,675 | 29,087 |
| 2019/20 | 10,997 | 14,755 | 25,752 |
| 2020/21 | 10,082 | 13,743 | 23,825 |
| 2021/22 | 10,435 | 13,497 | 23,932 |
| Total | 57,472 | 75,554 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 6: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintile and academic year

| Academic Year | Quintile 1 (Most deprived) | Quintile 2 | Quintile 3 | Quintile 4 | Quintile 5 (Least deprived) | Not Known | Total |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 2017/18 | 8,060 | 6,991 | 6,167 | 5,289 | 3,278 | 645 | 30,430 |
| 2018/19 | 7,718 | 6,828 | 6,049 | 5,078 | 2,829 | 585 | 29,087 |
| 2019/20 | 7,122 | 6,137 | 5,118 | 4,362 | 2,594 | 419 | 25,752 |
| 2020/21 | 6,546 | 5,820 | 4,822 | 3,907 | 2,297 | 433 | 23,825 |
| 2021/22 | 6,722 | 5,470 | 4,783 | 4,134 | 2,323 | 500 | 23,932 |
| Total | 36,168 | 31,246 | 26,939 | 22,770 | 13,321 | 2,582 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 7: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintile, subject and target level since 2017/18

| Subject | Target Level | Quintile 1 (Most deprived) | Quintile 2 | Quintile 3 | Quintile 4 | Quintile 5 (Least deprived) | Not Known | Total |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Literacy | Entry Level 1 | 225 | 184 | 117 | 149 | 68 | 17 | 760 |
| | Entry Level 2 | 816 | 443 | 360 | 333 | 184 | 43 | 2,179 |
| | Entry Level 3 | 1,852 | 1,158 | 960 | 827 | 438 | 66 | 5,301 |
| | Level 1 | 5,106 | 4,081 | 3,429 | 2,949 | 1,747 | 288 | 17,600 |
| | Level 2 | 4,610 | 4,434 | 3,886 | 3,173 | 1,829 | 334 | 18,266 |
| | Not Known | 86 | 106 | 84 | 54 | 30 | 9 | 369 |
| | Total | 12,695 | 10,406 | 8,836 | 7,485 | 4,296 | 757 | 44,475 |
| Numeracy | Entry Level 1 | 167 | 152 | 99 | 95 | 59 | 13 | 585 |
| | Entry Level 2 | 791 | 479 | 325 | 326 | 154 | 38 | 2,113 |
| | Entry Level 3 | 2,534 | 1,792 | 1,403 | 1,172 | 658 | 111 | 7,670 |
| | Level 1 | 6,314 | 5,093 | 4,182 | 3,732 | 2,196 | 387 | 21,904 |
| | Level 2 | 4,560 | 4,449 | 4,033 | 3,342 | 1,962 | 480 | 18,826 |
| | Not Known | 99 | 100 | 74 | 55 | 31 | 9 | 368 |
| | Total | 14,465 | 12,065 | 10,116 | 8,722 | 5,060 | 1,038 | 51,466 |
| ICT | Entry Level 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| | Entry Level 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | Entry Level 3 | 18 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 16 | 52 |
| | Level 1 | 5,182 | 4,609 | 4,069 | 3,399 | 2,226 | 259 | 19,744 |
| | Level 2 | 3,743 | 4,067 | 3,848 | 3,117 | 1,722 | 500 | 16,997 |
| | Not Known | 60 | 89 | 62 | 44 | 13 | 12 | 280 |
| | Total | 9,008 | 8,775 | 7,987 | 6,563 | 3,965 | 787 | 37,085 |
| Total | Entry Level 1 | 396 | 337 | 216 | 245 | 128 | 30 | 1,352 |
| | Entry Level 2 | 1,608 | 924 | 687 | 659 | 338 | 81 | 4,297 |
| | Entry Level 3 | 4,404 | 2,957 | 2,369 | 2,001 | 1,099 | 193 | 13,023 |
| | Level 1 | 16,602 | 13,783 | 11,680 | 10,080 | 6,169 | 934 | 59,248 |
| | Level 2 | 12,913 | 12,950 | 11,767 | 9,632 | 5,513 | 1,314 | 54,089 |
| | Not Known | 245 | 295 | 220 | 153 | 74 | 30 | 1,017 |
| | Total | 36,168 | 31,246 | 26,939 | 22,770 | 13,321 | 2,582 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year

| Academic Year | Literacy | Numeracy | ICT | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2017/18 | 10,246 | 11,458 | 8,726 | 30,430 |
| 2018/19 | 9,929 | 11,581 | 7,577 | 29,087 |
| 2019/20 | 8,779 | 10,276 | 6,697 | 25,752 |
| 2020/21 | 8,048 | 9,603 | 6,174 | 23,825 |
| 2021/22 | 7,473 | 8,548 | 7,911 | 23,932 |
| Total | 44,475 | 51,466 | 37,085 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 9: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age band since 2017/18

| Age band | Literacy | Numeracy | ICT | Total |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 16 | 12,235 | 13,488 | 12,210 | 37,933 |
| 17 | 8,430 | 10,326 | 8,318 | 27,074 |
| 18-19 | 7,327 | 9,670 | 6,463 | 23,460 |
| 20-24 | 8,362 | 9,232 | 3,796 | 21,390 |
| 25-34 | 3,440 | 3,700 | 1,648 | 8,788 |
| 35-44 | 2,528 | 2,706 | 1,697 | 6,931 |
| 45+ | 2,029 | 2,224 | 2,947 | 7,200 |
| Unknown | 124 | 120 | 6 | 250 |
| Total | 44,475 | 51,466 | 37,085 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 10: Essential Skills enrolments by sex, subject and academic year

| Academic Year | Literacy | | | Numeracy | | | ICT | | | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total | |
| 2017/18 | 4,295 | 5,951 | 10,246 | 5,451 | 6,007 | 11,458 | 3,800 | 4,926 | 8,726 | 30,430 |
| 2018/19 | 3,999 | 5,930 | 9,929 | 5,382 | 6,199 | 11,581 | 3,031 | 4,546 | 7,577 | 29,087 |
| 2019/20 | 3,578 | 5,201 | 8,779 | 4,855 | 5,421 | 10,276 | 2,564 | 4,133 | 6,697 | 25,752 |
| 2020/21 | 3,206 | 4,842 | 8,048 | 4,502 | 5,101 | 9,603 | 2,374 | 3,800 | 6,174 | 23,825 |
| 2021/22 | 3,166 | 4,307 | 7,473 | 4,148 | 4,400 | 8,548 | 3,121 | 4,790 | 7,911 | 23,932 |
| Total | 18,244 | 26,231 | 44,475 | 24,338 | 27,128 | 51,466 | 14,890 | 22,195 | 37,085 | 133,026 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 11: Essential Skills enrolments by FE College, 2021/22

| FE College | Enrolments |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Belfast Metropolitan College | 2,264 |
| Northern Regional College | 2,123 |
| North West Regional College | 1,783 |
| South Eastern Regional College | 2,453 |
| Southern Regional College | 2,158 |
| South West College | 2,201 |
| Total | 12,982 |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Notes: Figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 12: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year

| Academic Year | Number of Qualifications |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 2017/18 | 18,394 |
| 2018/19 | 17,514 |
| 2019/20 | 15,919 |
| 2020/21 | 15,149 |
| 2021/22 | 13,513 |
| Total | 80,489 |

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year

| Academic Year | Entry Level 1 | Entry Level 2 | Entry Level 3 | Level 1 | Level 2 | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2017/18 | 453 | 778 | 2,537 | 5,863 | 8,763 | 18,394 |
| 2018/19 | 292 | 577 | 2,279 | 5,532 | 8,834 | 17,514 |
| 2019/20 | 252 | 620 | 2,186 | 5,389 | 7,472 | 15,919 |
| 2020/21 | 161 | 387 | 1,390 | 5,028 | 8,183 | 15,149 |
| 2021/22 | 221 | 386 | 1,507 | 4,653 | 6,746 | 13,513 |
| Total | 1,379 | 2,748 | 9,899 | 26,465 | 39,998 | 80,489 |

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band and academic year

| Academic Year | 16 | 17 | 18-19 | 20-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45+ | Unkn-own | Total |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2017/18 | 2,489 | 4,663 | 4,402 | 1,834 | 1,481 | 1,140 | 1,444 | 941 | 18,394 |
| 2018/19 | 1,322 | 4,830 | 4,621 | 1,942 | 1,453 | 1,157 | 1,544 | 645 | 17,514 |
| 2019/20 | 1,820 | 4,341 | 4,415 | 1,784 | 1,078 | 875 | 940 | 666 | 15,919 |
| 2020/21 | 1,785 | 4,366 | 4,648 | 1,591 | 798 | 732 | 808 | 421 | 15,149 |
| 2021/22 | 1,835 | 2,938 | 3,785 | 1,654 | 963 | 823 | 717 | 798 | 13,513 |
| Total | 9,251 | 21,138 | 21,871 | 8,805 | 5,773 | 4,727 | 5,453 | 3,471 | 80,489 |

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by sex and academic year

| Academic Year | Female | Male | Unknown | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| 2017/18 | 7,859 | 10,524 | 11 | 18,394 |
| 2018/19 | 7,623 | 9,891 | - | 17,514 |
| 2019/20 | 6,658 | 9,258 | 3 | 15,919 |
| 2020/21 | 6,315 | 8,725 | 109 | 15,149 |
| 2021/22 | 5,323 | 8,166 | 24 | 13,513 |
| Total | 33,778 | 46,564 | 147 | 80,489 |

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 16: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year

| Academic Year | Literacy | Numeracy | ICT | Total |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2017/18 | 6,612 | 6,822 | 4,960 | 18,394 |
| 2018/19 | 5,254 | 6,541 | 5,719 | 17,514 |
| 2019/20 | 5,308 | 5,926 | 4,685 | 15,919 |
| 2020/21 | 5,049 | 6,266 | 3,834 | 15,149 |
| 2021/22 | 4,440 | 5,862 | 3,211 | 13,513 |
| Total | 26,663 | 31,417 | 22,409 | 80,489 |

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 17: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject, level achieved and academic year

| Academic Year | Literacy | | | Numeracy | | | ICT | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Entry Level | Level 1 | Level 2 | Entry Level | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 1 | Level 2 |
| 2017/18 | 1,662 | 1,865 | 3,085 | 2,106 | 2,338 | 2,378 | 1,660 | 3,300 |
| 2018/19 | 1,342 | 1,406 | 2,506 | 1,806 | 2,386 | 2,349 | 1,740 | 3,979 |
| 2019/20 | 1,267 | 1,668 | 2,373 | 1,791 | 1,997 | 2,138 | 1,724 | 2,961 |
| 2020/21 | 853 | 1,772 | 2,424 | 1,085 | 2,139 | 3,042 | 1,117 | 2,717 |
| 2021/22 | 929 | 1,304 | 2,207 | 1,185 | 2,394 | 2,283 | 955 | 2,256 |
| Total | 6,053 | 8,015 | 12,595 | 7,973 | 11,254 | 12,190 | 7,196 | 15,213 |

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 18: Essential Skills performance analysis by subject since 2017/18

| Subject | Enrolments (enrolments dataset) | Completers (enrolments dataset) | Retention rate | Qualifications (awarding organisations dataset) | Achievement rate | Success rate |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| Literacy | 44,230 | 40,577 | 91.7% | 26,663 | 65.7% | 60.3% |
| Numeracy | 51,044 | 46,204 | 90.5% | 31,417 | 68.0% | 61.5% |
| ICT | 36,947 | 34,077 | 92.2% | 22,409 | 65.8% | 60.7% |
| All Subjects | 132,221 | 120,858 | 91.4% | 80,489 | 66.6% | 60.9% |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22; Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Further details on how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 19: Essential Skills performance analysis by sex since 2017/18

| Sex | Enrolments (enrolments dataset) | Completers (enrolments dataset) | Retention rate | Qualifications (awarding organisations dataset) | Achievement rate | Success rate |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| Female | 57,161 | 51,152 | 89.5% | 33,778 | 66.0% | 59.1% |
| Male | 75,060 | 69,706 | 92.9% | 46,564 | 66.8% | 62.0% |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | N/A | 147 | N/A | N/A |
| Total | 132,221 | 120,858 | 91.4% | 80,489 | 66.6% | 60.9% |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22; Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Further details on how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 20: Essential Skills retention rate by age band since 2017/18

| Age Band | Enrolments (enrolments dataset) | Completers (enrolments dataset) | Retention rate |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 16 | 37,636 | 34,843 | 92.6% |
| 17 | 26,888 | 24,450 | 90.9% |
| 18-19 | 23,324 | 20,906 | 89.6% |
| 20-24 | 21,331 | 20,245 | 94.9% |
| 25-34 | 8,741 | 7,749 | 88.7% |
| 35-44 | 6,899 | 6,141 | 89.0% |
| 45+ | 7,153 | 6,300 | 88.1% |
| Unknown | 249 | 224 | N/A |
| Total | 132,221 | 120,858 | 91.4% |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention rate is calculated are available in Annex 2.

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by age band due to differences in the way age is calculated for enrolments and qualifications (see Annex 2).

Table 21: Essential Skills retention rate by target level since 2017/18

| Target level | Enrolments (enrolments dataset) | Completers (enrolments dataset) | Retention rate |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Entry Level 1 | 1,348 | 1,235 | 91.6% |
| Entry Level 2 | 4,267 | 3,823 | 89.6% |
| Entry Level 3 | 12,941 | 11,496 | 88.8% |
| Level 1 | 59,039 | 54,495 | 92.3% |
| Level 2 | 53,772 | 49,602 | 92.2% |
| Not Known | 854 | 207 | N/A |
| Total | 132,221 | 120,858 | 91.4% |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22, Client Management System for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention rate is calculated are available in Annex 2.

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by level as students may qualify at a different level to the 'target level' at which they enrolled.

Table 22: Essential Skills retention rate by target level in 2021/22

| Target level | Enrolments (enrolments dataset) | Completers (enrolments dataset) | Retention rate |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Entry Level 1 | 123 | 110 | 89.4% |
| Entry Level 2 | 655 | 595 | 90.8% |
| Entry Level 3 | 1,943 | 1,702 | 87.6% |
| Level 1 | 10,255 | 9,407 | 91.7% |
| Level 2 | 10,668 | 9,768 | 91.6% |
| Not Known | 3 | 3 | N/A |
| Total | 23,647 | 21,585 | 91.3% |

Sources: Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2021/22, Client Management System for 2021/22.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 14th October 2022; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention rate is calculated are available in Annex 2.

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by level as students may qualify at a different level to the 'target level' at which they enrolled.

Annex 2: Definitions

Academic year

An academic year is defined as 1st August to 31st July.

Achievement rate

Achievement rate is defined as the percentage of enrolments completed by students who achieve a qualification.

'Completers' include any enrolments not classified as 'Withdrawn' or 'Transferred'.

$$\text{Achievement rate} = \frac{\text{Number of achievements}}{\text{Number of completers}}$$

Age

For enrolments, age is calculated at the start date of the enrolment.

For qualifications, age is calculated at the certification date.

Deprivation

The analysis presented in the publication utilises five groups or quintiles of Super Output Areas (SOAs), based on relative level of deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM). Enrolments are assigned to SOAs using the postcodes provided on enrolment records.

On 23rd November 2017, NIMDM 2017 replaced NIMDM 2010 as the official measure of relative deprivation in Northern Ireland. This provides a mechanism for ranking the 890 SOAs from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890). Accordingly, SOAs ranked 1 to 178 form the most deprived group relative to all other SOAs (Quintile 1), while those ranked 713 to 890 form the least deprived group (Quintile 5).

For further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland, please follow this link:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

Enrolments

The enrolment returns are merged and a process is in place to deal with any duplicate enrolments. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments.

FE College

There are six Further Education (FE) Colleges across Northern Ireland: Belfast Metropolitan College, Northern Regional College, North West Regional College, South Eastern Regional College, Southern Regional College and South West College.

Individuals

Individual students are determined using name and date of birth, and allocated to a particular academic year based on the start date of their first enrolment. Individuals can enrol on more than one course.

Level achieved

This is the level the awarding organisation has indicated the individual has achieved within the Essential Skills framework.

Qualifications

Total qualifications are taken to be the sum of all records within the Essential Skills Qualifications Return.

Retention rate

Retention rate is defined as the percentage of enrolments completed by students.

$$\text{Retention rate} = \frac{\text{Number of completers}}{\text{Number of enrolments}}$$

Success rate

Success rate is recognised as the overall measure of performance, which is the percentage of enrolments of students who complete and achieve a qualification.

$$\text{Success rate} = \frac{\text{Number of achievements}}{\text{Number of enrolments}}$$

Target level

When an individual enrolls on an Essential Skills course, they are assessed over a 6 to 8 week period to establish the level they are functioning at. They are then normally targeted at a level higher than their assessed level. Literacy and Numeracy courses are available for all five levels, whereas ICT is only available for Level 1 and Level 2.

Annex 3: Technical Notes

1. Enrolment information for FE Colleges is sourced from the Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2017/18 to 2021/22. For DfE's training and employment programmes, the source is the Essential Skills extract from the Client Management System (CMS).
2. Both Essential Skills enrolment returns are merged, and a process is in place to deal with any duplicate enrolments. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments.
3. The enrolment information is correct as of 14th October 2022. However, as some erroneous records are later excluded from the Essential Skills enrolment database, figures are provisional and are subject to change.
4. The source of the qualifications issued information is the quarterly data provided by the awarding organisations.
5. Qualifications issued figures are correct as of 30th September 2022. However, figures may be subject to change due to any amendments in the qualification data supplied later by the awarding organisations.
6. Any enrolment records that have been recorded as a 'transfer' should have an accompanying second enrolment record (the one they have transferred onto). These will be accounted for and only one record will remain for analysis purposes.
7. In terms of outcome, the original enrolment recorded as a transfer will not have any outcome recorded against it. Therefore, the transferred enrolment cannot be measured in terms of performance. Consequently, any enrolments recorded as transfers are excluded from performance analysis and are not included in final year enrolment counts.
8. Performance analysis is determined from 2017/18 to 2021/22. No individual academic year retention, achievement or success rates are calculated, as two separate datasets are utilised to produce the performance rates; one dataset is used to determine enrolments and one for qualifications issued. An individual can enrol in one academic year, whereas the qualification may not be issued until the next academic year. Consequently, individual year performance analysis may be skewed due to this scenario and, therefore, is not calculated within this publication.

Further Enquiries

Further details about any of the statistics in this statistical bulletin can be obtained from:

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