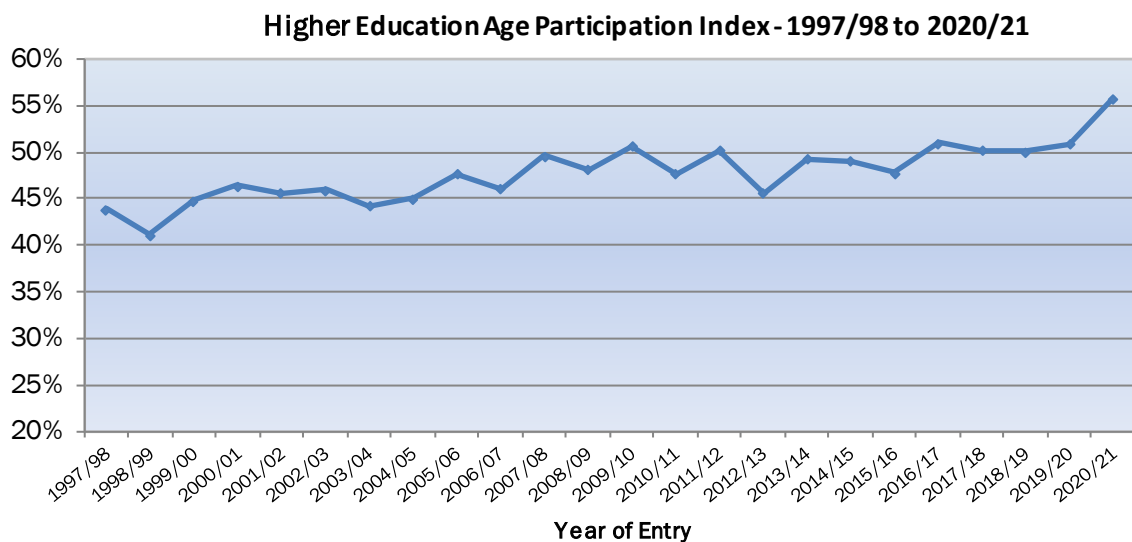


Higher Education Statistical Fact Sheet 1: Age Participation Index for Northern Ireland - 1997/98 to 2020/21

The Age Participation Index (API) is a measure used to demonstrate changes in participation of young people in Higher Education over time. More precisely, it is defined as the number of NI domiciled young entrants (aged under 21) to full-time undergraduate Higher Education (in the UK or Republic of Ireland) as a percentage of the 18 year-old population of Northern Ireland.

- The NI API for the 2020/21 academic year was 55.8%, the highest rate on record, and an increase of 4.9 percentage points from the 2019/20 academic year (50.9%), the largest annual increase recorded. While the figure can fluctuate by a few percentage points from year to year it has grown substantially in net terms since 1997/98, at which stage it was 43.9%.



Year	Proportion of NI 18 year olds
1997/98	43.9%
1998/99	41.2%
1999/00	44.8%
2000/01	46.4%
2001/02	45.6%
2002/03	46.0%
2003/04	44.2%
2004/05	45.0%
2005/06	47.7%
2006/07	46.1%
2007/08	49.6%
2008/09	48.2%

Year	Proportion of NI 18 year olds
2009/10	50.7%
2010/11	47.7%
2011/12	50.2%
2012/13	45.6%
2013/14	49.3%
2014/15	49.1%
2015/16	47.8%
2016/17	51.0%
2017/18	50.2%
2018/19	50.1%
2019/20	50.9%
2020/21	55.8%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Further Education Statistical Record (FESR), Consolidated Data Return (CDR), Higher Education Authority - Republic of Ireland (HEA), Department for Education, Welsh Government (WG), Scottish Government (SG).

Notes:

1. There has been a change to the data coverage in this year's fact sheet, as Alternative Provider (AP) data from the HESA Student Alternative record have been combined for the first time with the usual HESA Student Record data submitted by HEI providers. An AP is any provider of higher education courses: not in direct receipt of recurrent funding from UK funding bodies; not a Further Education college; and not registered as 'approved (fee cap)' on the Office for Students (OfS) register. Historical figures in the online open data tables have been produced back to, and including, 2017/18, using this new methodology. In light of the small number of enrolments involved, this change is unlikely to have had much impact on the continuity of the time series.
2. From 2000/01, the data used to calculate the API are based on full-year enrolments. The data used in previous years were based on a snapshot of enrolments at 1st December of the academic year. Full year data are defined by the HESA standard registration population.
3. In 2013/14, the Further Education Statistical Record (FESR) ceased to exist and was replaced by the Consolidated Data Return (CDR).
4. There is no single common measure of HE participation across the UK. England and Scotland calculate the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR), which is a more wide ranging measure and includes, in addition to the API, part-time students and students up to the age of 30. Wales does not currently calculate a specific age participation rate.
5. Some students on Foundation Degrees had been included in both the HEI and FEC figures, as they were registered at and awarded qualifications from HEIs, but were taught at FECs. From 2019/20 onwards these students are excluded from the HEI population. APIs were recalculated back to 2010/11 with this new methodology and so will differ slightly from those given in previous publications. Prior to 2010/11 the impact of foundation degree students on the API was very small and it was not recalculated.
6. The API percentage can fluctuate from year to year as a result of small increases or decreases in the 18 year old population each year in combination with small increases or decreases in enrolments.

Links:

Data from this fact sheet are available in open data format at the following link:

[Higher Education Statistical Factsheets](#)

More Higher Education statistics are available from:

[Higher Education Statistics and Research](#)