

Performance Indicators in Higher Education - 2018/19

Student Retention Fact Sheet

Non-continuation following year of entry: full-time 2017/18 entrants and part-time 2016/17 entrants

For this indicator, a value lower than the benchmark indicates that an institution is performing better than comparable institutions. Benchmarks are calculated for each institution, but not at a country level (see [Contextual Information](#) document).

(a) Percentage of **full-time first degree** entrants failing to continue in Higher Education (HE) in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18 (Table 1, Figure 1).

The Open University (OU) does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2017/18 were part-time.

Young¹ Entrants (Aged under 21)

Collectively, Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions (NI HEIs) had a better non-continuation rate than the UK average of 6.8%, with 6.3% of young full-time first degree students no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18.

On this basis, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) at 3.9%, St Mary's (4.3%) and Stranmillis (1.4%) all out-performed their benchmarks (4.1%, 5.1% and 5.4% respectively), but not significantly so. In contrast, Ulster University (UU) at 9.0% performed worse than its benchmark (7.6%), but not significantly so.

Table 1: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18

	Young Entrants		Mature Entrants		All Entrants	
	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark
UK	6.8	-	13.7	-	8.3	-
NI	6.3	-	9.9	-	7.1	-
QUB	3.9	4.1	9.5	10.1	4.9	5.2
St Mary's	4.3	5.1	..	..	4.4	5.5
Stranmillis	1.4	5.4	7.7	9.4	2.4	6.0
UU	9.0	7.6	10.3	13.5 +	9.3	9.0

Note: Percentages are not subject to rounding, but those calculated on populations containing fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as '..'

A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

¹ See [Contextual Information](#) document point 6.

Mature¹ Entrants (Aged 21 and over)

Collectively, NI HEIs had a lower non-continuation rate than the UK average of 13.7%, with 9.9% of mature full-time first degree students no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18.

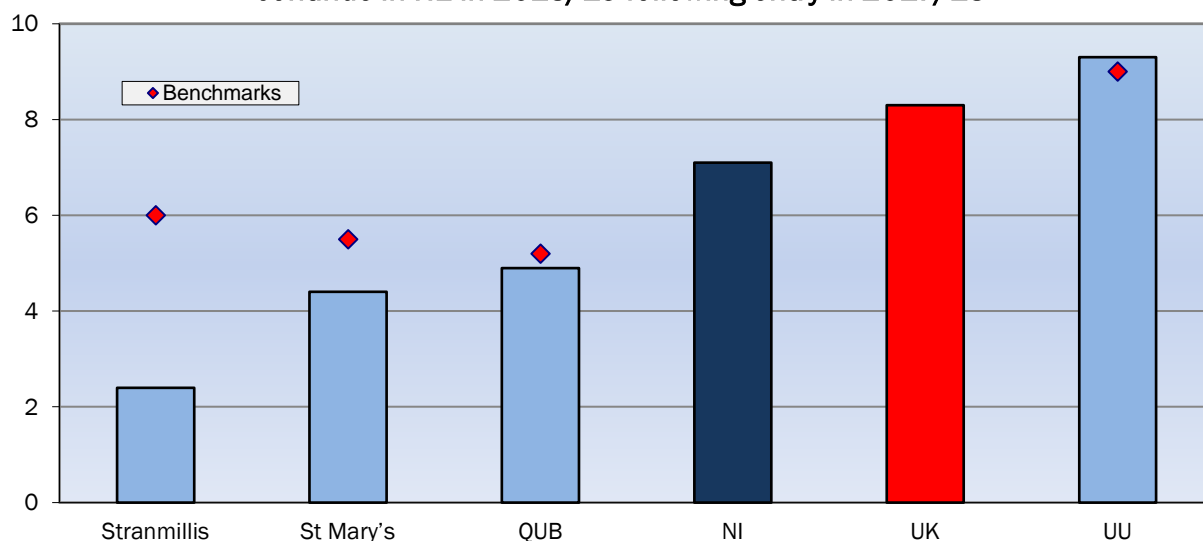
On the same basis, UU (10.3%) significantly out-performed its benchmark non-continuation rate (13.5%). QUB (9.5%) and Stranmillis (7.7%) also out-performed their benchmarks (10.1% and 9.4% respectively), but not significantly so. Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's.

All Entrants

For all full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs, 7.1% of students were no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18; better than the UK average of 8.3%.

On this basis, QUB (4.9%), St Mary's (4.4%) and Stranmillis (2.4%) all performed better than their benchmarks (5.2%, 5.5% and 6.0% respectively), although not significantly so. In contrast, UU (9.3%) had a higher non continuation rate than its benchmark (9.0%), but again, not significantly so.

Figure 1: Percentage of all full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19 following entry in 2017/18



(b) Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18.

This indicator looks at the percentage of entrants who come from low participation neighbourhoods. This indicator is not applicable in NI due to the methodological issues around the calculation of low participation areas at the NI institutional level (further information on this is available in the 'Contextual Information' document, which is published alongside this factsheet on the DfE website).

(c) Percentage of mature full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18 (Table 2).

This section disaggregates mature full-time first degree entrants into (i) those with a previous HE qualification and (ii) those with no previous HE qualification.

OU does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2017/18 were part-time. Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's or Stranmillis.

(i) Mature Full-time First Degree Entrants with previous HE qualification

For this category, the collective non-continuation rate for NI HEIs was better than the UK average of 12.7%, with 9.1% of mature full-time first degree entrants with a previous HE qualification no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18.

QUB (7.2%) and UU (10.1%) out-performed their benchmarks (9.0% and 13.9% respectively), though not significantly so.

(ii) Mature Full-time First Degree Entrants with no previous HE qualification

In respect of this category, NI HEIs collectively performed better than the UK average of 14.1%, with 10.8% of mature full-time first degree entrants with no previous HE qualification no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18.

QUB (11.8%) had a higher non-continuation rate than its benchmark (11.2%) while UU (10.4%) had a lower non-continuation rate than its benchmark (13.0%), although neither was significant.

Table 2: Percentage of mature full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18

	Previous HE qualification		No previous HE qualification	
	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark
UK	12.7	-	14.1	-
NI	9.1	-	10.8	-
QUB	7.2	9.0	11.8	11.2
St Mary's	..	..	..	..
Stranmillis	..	..	..	..
UU	10.1	13.9	10.4	13.0

Note: Percentages are not subject to rounding, but those calculated on populations containing fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as '..'

A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

(d) Percentage of full-time other undergraduate entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18 (Table 3).

Collectively, NI HEIs had a better non-continuation rate than the UK average of 17.1%, with 10.9% of full-time other undergraduate entrants no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18.

QUB (9.4%) out-performed its benchmark (11.4% and 8.8%), although not significantly so. Stranmillis (13.2%) performed worse than its benchmark (8.8%), but this was also not significant.

Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's or UU. OU does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2017/18 were part-time.

Table 3: Percentage of full-time other undergraduate entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18

	No longer in HE (%)	Bench-mark
UK	17.1	-
NI	10.9	-
QUB	9.4	11.4
St Mary's	..	..
Stranmillis	13.2	8.8
UU	..	..

Note: Percentages are not subject to rounding, but those calculated on populations containing fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as '..'

A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

(e) Percentage of part-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2016/17 (Table 4).

The part-time non-continuation indicator differs from the full-time indicators in that it looks at continuation two years following entry. It is further restricted to only include those students studying at least 30% of a full-time equivalent course and excludes students who are recorded as being registered on multiple courses and those registered on a first degree programme the year before they entered.

Entrants aged 30 and Under

The collective non-continuation rate for NI HEIs was better than the UK average of 33.9%, with 32.4% of part-time first degree entrants aged 30 and under no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2016/17.

Stranmillis (7.1%) and UU (23.4%) performed significantly better than their respective benchmarks (27.3% and 31.7%). OU (43.9%) performed worse than its benchmark (36.7%), though not significantly so. Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for QUB or St Mary's.

Entrants aged over 30

At NI HEIs, 32.6% of part-time first degree entrants aged over 30 were no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2016/17, compared with the UK average of 31.8%. UU (26.3%) performed better than its benchmark of 30.6%, while OU (39.8%) performed worse than its benchmark (35.1%). Neither difference was significant.

Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for QUB, St Mary's or Stranmillis.

All Entrants

Collectively, the non-continuation rate for part-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs was similar to the UK average (33.0%), with 32.5% such students no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2016/17. Stranmillis (9.1%) and UU (24.4%) performed significantly better than their respective benchmarks (25.8% and 31.5%). In contrast, OU (42.2%) performed significantly worse than its benchmark (36.0%). QUB (32.0%) also performed worse than its benchmark of 29.6%, although not significantly so.

Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's.

Table 4: Percentage of part-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2016/17

	Aged 30 and under		Aged over 30		All Entrants	
	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark
UK	33.9	-	31.8	-	33.0	-
NI	32.4	-	32.6	-	32.5	-
QUB	..	..	..	..	32.0	29.6
St Mary's	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stranmillis	7.1 +	27.3	..	..	9.1 +	25.8
UU	23.4 +	31.7	26.3	30.6	24.4 +	31.5
OU (in NI)	43.9	36.7	39.8	35.1	42.2 -	36.0

Note: Percentages are not subject to rounding, but those calculated on populations containing fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as '..'

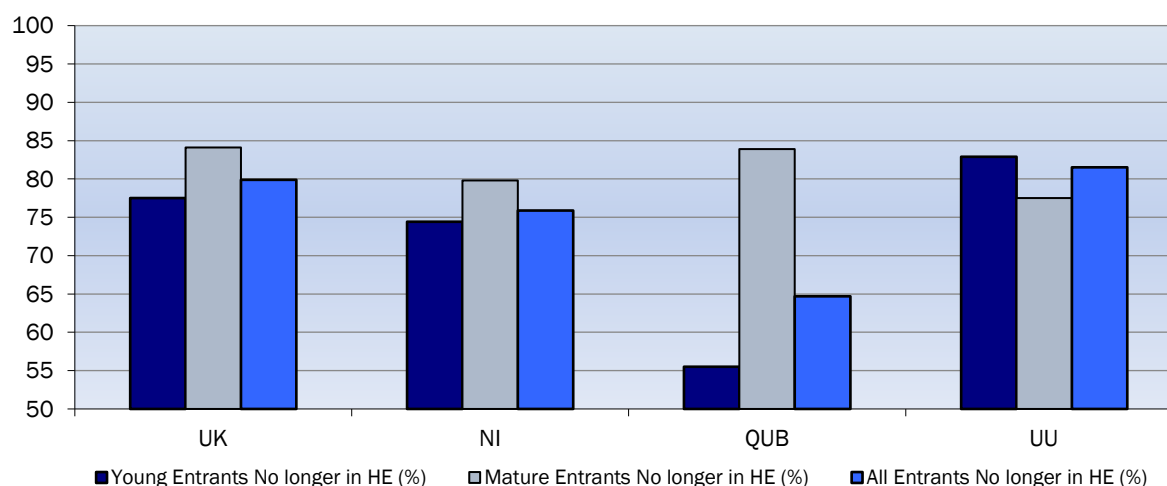
A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

Resumption of study in 2018/19 after a year out in 2017/18 (2016/17 entrants)

There are no benchmarks associated with this indicator, as the student's decision to return to study was not considered as an appropriate benchmark for comparing UK HEIs.

(a) Full-time first degree entrants (Table 5 and Figure 2)

Figure 2: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18 and were no longer in HE in 2018/19



OU does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2016/17 were part-time.

Young Entrants

Of all young full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18, 74.4% did not return to HE in 2018/19. This figure was better than the UK average of 77.5%.

At QUB, 55.5% of all young full-time first degree entrants in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18 did not return in 2018/19; this compares with 82.9% at UU. Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's or Stranmillis.

Mature Entrants

Of all mature full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18, 79.8% did not return to HE in 2018/19. This figure was better than the UK average of 84.1%.

At QUB, 83.9% of all mature full-time first degree entrants in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18 did not return in 2018/19; this compares with 77.5% at UU. Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's or Stranmillis.

All Entrants

Of all full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18, 75.9% did not return to HE in 2018/19. This figure was better than the UK average of 79.9%.

At QUB, 64.7% of all full-time first degree entrants in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18 did not return in 2018/19; this compares with 81.5% at UU. Again, due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's or Stranmillis.

Table 5: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18 and were no longer in HE in 2018/19.

	Young Entrants	Mature Entrants	All Entrants
UK	77.5	84.1	79.9
NI	74.4	79.8	75.9
QUB	55.5	83.9	64.7
St Mary's	..	..	..
Stranmillis	..	..	..
UU	82.9	77.5	81.5

Note: Percentages are not subject to rounding, but those calculated on populations containing fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as '..'

A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

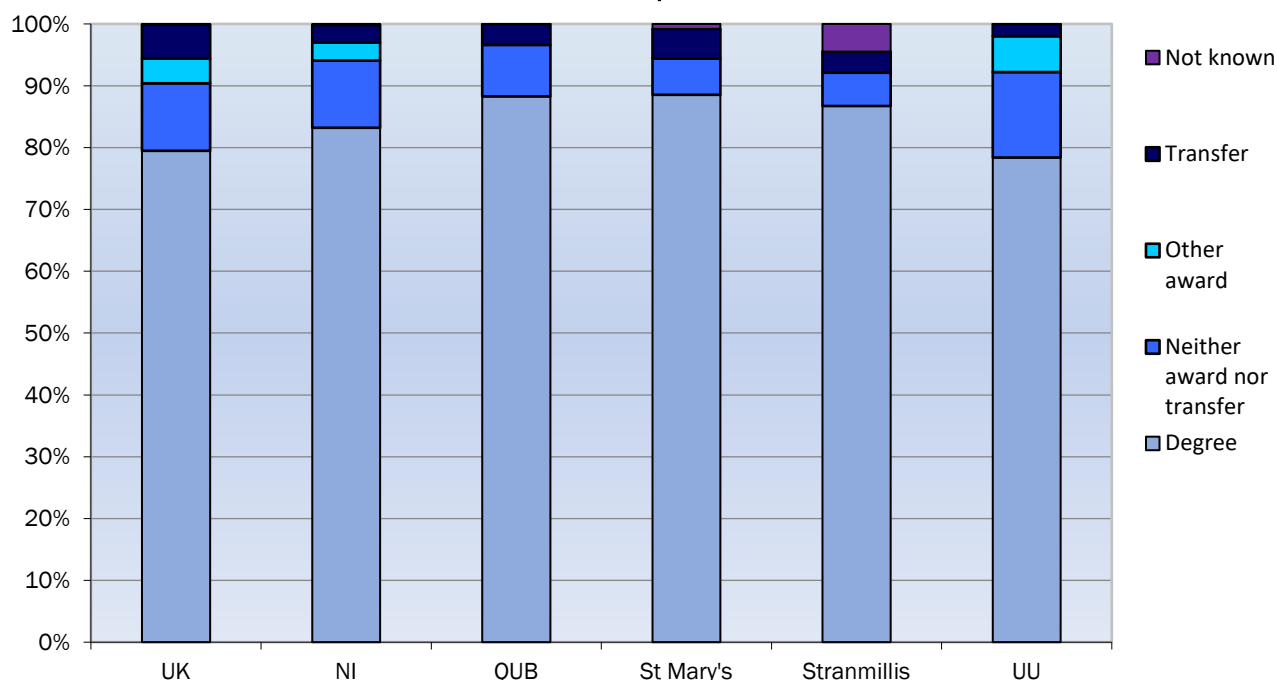
(b) Full-time other undergraduate entrants

Of all full-time other undergraduate entrants to NI HEIs in 2016/17 who took a year out in 2017/18, 84.6% did not return to HE in 2018/19. This figure was better than the UK average of 86.5%. Due to small numbers, this indicator has not been produced for individual NI HEIs.

Projected learning outcomes: Full-time first degree entrants – 2017/18

Another way to look at non-continuation rates is to use information on current movements of students to project what would happen in the long term. Thus, this indicator projects what proportion of students will eventually gain a degree, what proportion will leave their current university or college and transfer into HE elsewhere, and what proportion will leave HE altogether without any qualification.

Figure 3: Projected Learning Outcomes - Full-time first degree entrants - 2017/18



UU does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2017/18 were part-time.

(a) Projected to attain a degree² (Table 6, Figure 3)

For this section, a value higher than the benchmark indicates that an institution is projected to perform better than comparable institutions.

Collectively, NI HEIs were projected to perform better than the UK average of 79.4%, with 83.2% of full-time students starting first degree courses in 2017/18 expected to gain a degree.

QUB (88.2%) and St Mary's (88.6%) were projected to perform above their respective benchmarks (86.1% and 85.7%) for full-time first degree entrants expected to gain a degree. In contrast, Stranmillis (86.8%) and UU (78.3%) were projected to perform below their respective benchmarks (88.3% and 79.2%).

² See [Contextual Information](#) document point 4.

(b) Projected to finish without either gaining an award or transferring to another HEI (Table 6, Figure 3)

For this section, a value below the benchmark indicates that an institution is projected to perform better than comparable institutions.

Overall, NI HEIs were projected to perform similarly to the UK average, with 10.9% of full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2017/18 projected to finish without either gaining an award or transferring to another HEI, the same as the UK average.

On this basis, QUB (8.3%) and UU (13.8%) were projected to perform worse than their respective benchmarks (6.8% and 11.4%), whereas St Mary's (5.9%) and Stranmillis (5.4%) were projected to perform better than their respective benchmarks (6.5% and 5.9%). None of these differences were significant.

Table 6: Percentage of full-time first degree students expected to gain a degree or to gain neither an award nor transfer – 2017/18 entrants

	Obtain degree		No award nor transfer	
	Percentage	Benchmark	Percentage	Benchmark
UK	79.4	-	10.9	-
NI	83.2	-	10.9	-
QUB	88.2	86.1	8.3	6.8
St Mary's	88.6	85.7	5.9	6.5
Stranmillis	86.8	88.3	5.4	5.9
UU	78.3	79.2	13.8	11.4

Note: Percentages are not subject to rounding, but those calculated on populations containing fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as '..'

A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

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