

## Performance Indicators in Higher Education - 2019/20

### Student Retention Fact Sheet

#### Non-continuation following year of entry: full-time 2018/19 entrants and part-time 2017/18 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 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19 (Table 1, Figure 1)

The Open University (OU) does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2018/19 were part-time.

#### Young<sup>1</sup> Entrants (Aged under 21)

Collectively, Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions (NI HEIs) had a better non-continuation rate than the UK average of 6.7%, with 5.5% of young full-time first degree students no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19.

On this basis, St. Mary's (0.9%) significantly out-performed its benchmark non-continuation rate (4.8%). Ulster University (UU) (6.8%) also out-performed its benchmark (7.3%), but not significantly so. In contrast, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) (4.3%) and Stranmillis (6.1%) performed worse than their benchmarks (4.1% and 5.2% respectively), but not significantly so.

**Table 1: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19**

Provider	Young Entrants		Mature Entrants		All Entrants	
	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark
UK	6.7	-	13.5	-	8.3	-
NI	<b>5.5</b>	-	<b>6.4</b>	-	<b>5.7</b>	-
QUB	4.3	4.1	7.4	10.2	4.9	5.3
St Mary's	0.9+	4.8	..	..	1.2	5.1
Stranmillis	6.1	5.2	3.6	9.9	5.8	5.8
UU	6.8	7.3	5.8+	12.9	6.6	8.6

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.

<sup>1</sup> See [Contextual Information](#) document point 6.

## Mature<sup>1</sup> Entrants (Aged 21 and over)

Collectively, NI HEIs had a lower non-continuation rate than the UK average of 13.5%, with 6.4% of mature full-time first degree students no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19.

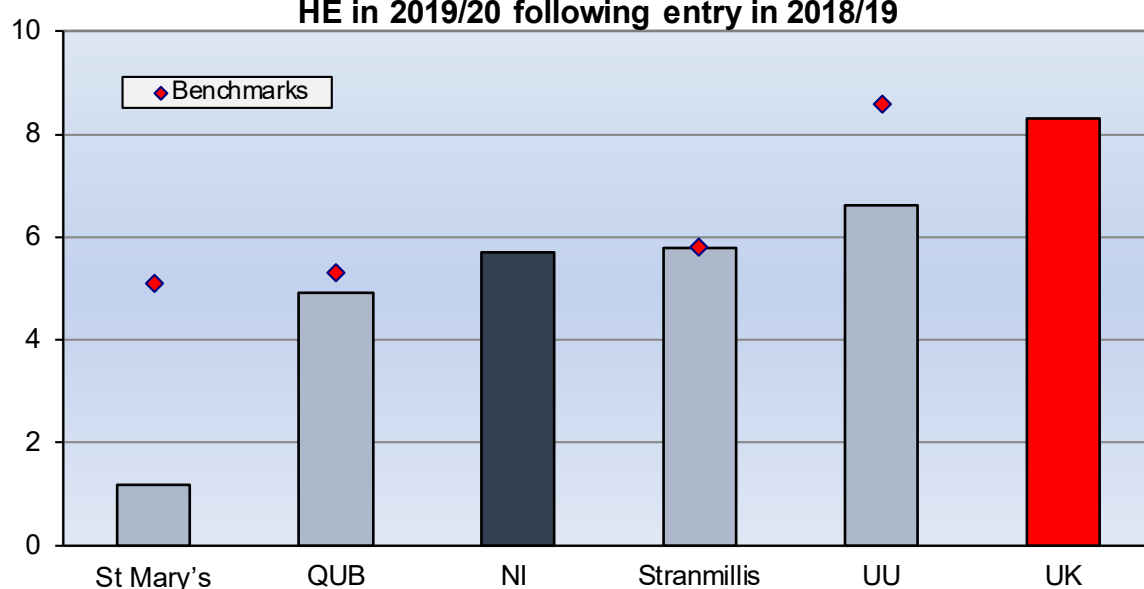
On the same basis, UU (5.8%) significantly out-performed its benchmark non-continuation rate (12.9%). QUB (7.4%) and Stranmillis (3.6%) also out-performed their benchmarks (10.2% and 9.9% respectively), but not significantly so. Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for St Mary's.

## All Entrants

For all full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs, 5.7% of students were no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19; better than the UK average of 8.3%.

On this basis, UU (6.6%), QUB (4.9%) and St Mary's (1.2%) all performed better than their benchmarks (8.6%, 5.3% and 5.1% respectively), although not significantly so. Stranmillis had the same non-continuation rate as its benchmark (5.8%).

**Figure 1: Percentage of all full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2019/20 following entry in 2018/19**



## (b) Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods failing to continue in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19.

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 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19 (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 2018/19 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 12.3%, with 6.2% of mature full-time first degree entrants with a previous HE qualification no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19.

UU (5.8%) performed significantly better than its benchmark of 12.9%. QUB (6.9%) outperformed its benchmark (9.5%), although 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 14.2%, with 6.8% of mature full-time first degree entrants with no previous HE qualification no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19.

UU (5.9%) performed significantly better than its benchmark of 12.8%. QUB (8.1%) outperformed its benchmark (11.2%), although not significantly so.

**Table 2: Percentage of mature full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19**

Provider	Previous HE qualification		No previous HE qualification	
	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark	No longer in HE (%)	Benchmark
UK	12.3	-	14.2	-
NI	<b>6.2</b>	-	<b>6.8</b>	-
QUB	6.9	9.5	8.1	11.2
St Mary's	..	..	..	..
Stranmillis	..	..	..	..
UU	5.8+	12.9	5.9+	12.8

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 2019/20, following entry in 2018/19**

This indicator has only been produced for UU, due to small numbers in the remaining NI HEIs. UU (23.1%) performed worse than its benchmark (11.5%) but not significantly so.

#### **(e) Percentage of part-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2017/18 (Table 3)**

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 32.1%, with 25.8% of part-time first degree entrants aged 30 and under no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2017/18.

Stranmillis (4.5%) and UU (20.2%) performed significantly better than their respective benchmarks (24.6% and 29.4%). OU (34.6%) performed similar to its benchmark (34.5%). Due to small numbers, this measure has not been produced for QUB or St Mary's.

#### **Entrants aged over 30**

At NI HEIs, 28.7% of part-time first degree entrants aged over 30 were no longer in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2017/18, compared with the UK average of 31.2%. QUB (13.0%), UU (26.1%) and OU (32.0%) all performed better than their benchmarks of 26.6%, 29.3% and 32.8% respectively. None of these differences were significant.

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

#### **All Entrants**

Collectively, the non-continuation rate for part-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs was lower than the UK average (31.7%), with 26.9% such students no longer in HE in 2018/19, following entry in 2017/18. Stranmillis (3.4%) and UU (21.7%) performed significantly better than their respective benchmarks (24.0% and 29.4%). QUB (14.3%) and OU (33.4%) performed better than their benchmarks (27.4% and 33.7% respectively) but not significantly so.

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

**Table 3: Percentage of part-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2019/20, following entry in 2017/18**

Provider	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	32.1	-	31.2	-	31.7	-
NI	<b>25.8</b>	-	<b>28.7</b>	-	<b>26.9</b>	-
QUB	..	..	13.0	26.6	14.3	27.4
St Mary's	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stranmillis	4.5+	24.6	..	..	3.4+	24.0
UU	20.2+	29.4	26.1	29.3	21.7+	29.4
OU (in NI)	34.6	34.5	32.0	32.8	33.4	33.7

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

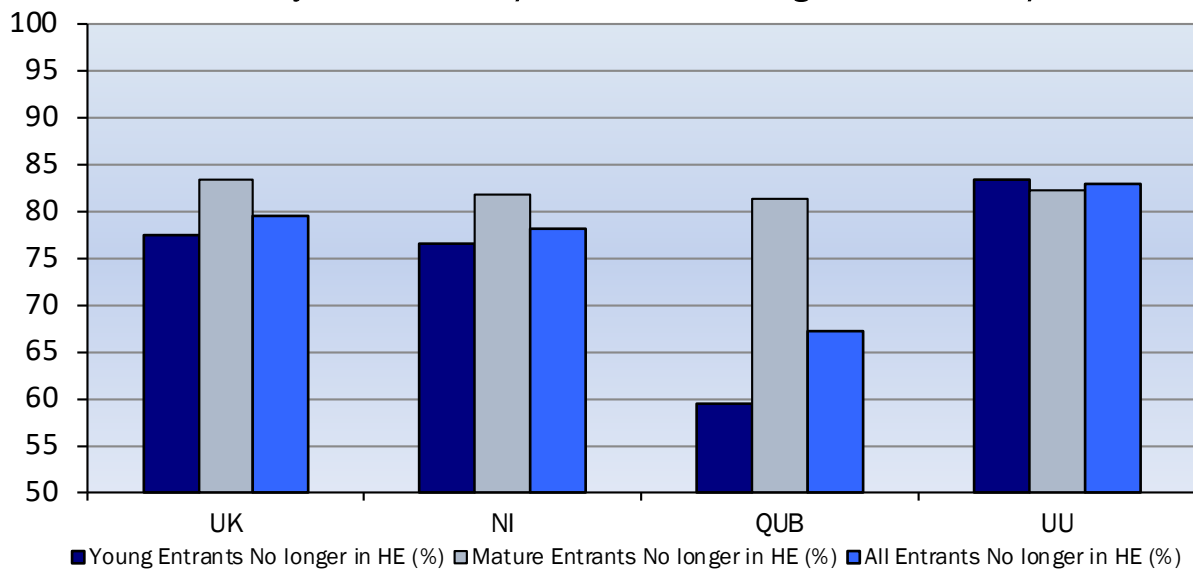
A '+/-' beside the percentage shows that the indicator is significantly better/worse than its benchmark.

## Resumption of study in 2019/20 after a year out in 2018/19 (2017/18 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 4 and Figure 2)

**Figure 2: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19 and were no longer in HE in 2019/20**



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.

#### Young Entrants

Of all young full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19, 76.5% did not return to HE in 2019/20. This figure was better than the UK average of 77.4%.

At QUB, 59.4% of all young full-time first degree entrants in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19 did not return in 2019/20; this compares with 83.3% at UU.

#### Mature Entrants

Of all mature full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19, 81.8% did not return to HE in 2019/20. This figure was better than the UK average of 83.5%.

At QUB, 81.4% of all mature full-time first degree entrants in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19 did not return in 2019/20; this compares with 82.3% at UU.

## All Entrants

Of all full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19, 78.1% did not return to HE in 2019/20. This figure was better than the UK average of 79.6%.

At QUB, 67.2% of all full-time first degree entrants in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19 did not return in 2019/20; this compares with 83.0% at UU.

**Table 4: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants in 2017/18 who took a year out in 2018/19 and were no longer in HE in 2019/20**

Provider	Young Entrants	Mature Entrants	All Entrants
UK	77.4	83.5	79.6
NI	<b>76.5</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>78.1</b>
QUB	59.4	81.4	67.2
St Mary's	..	..	..
Stranmillis	..	..	..
UU	83.3	82.3	83.0

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.

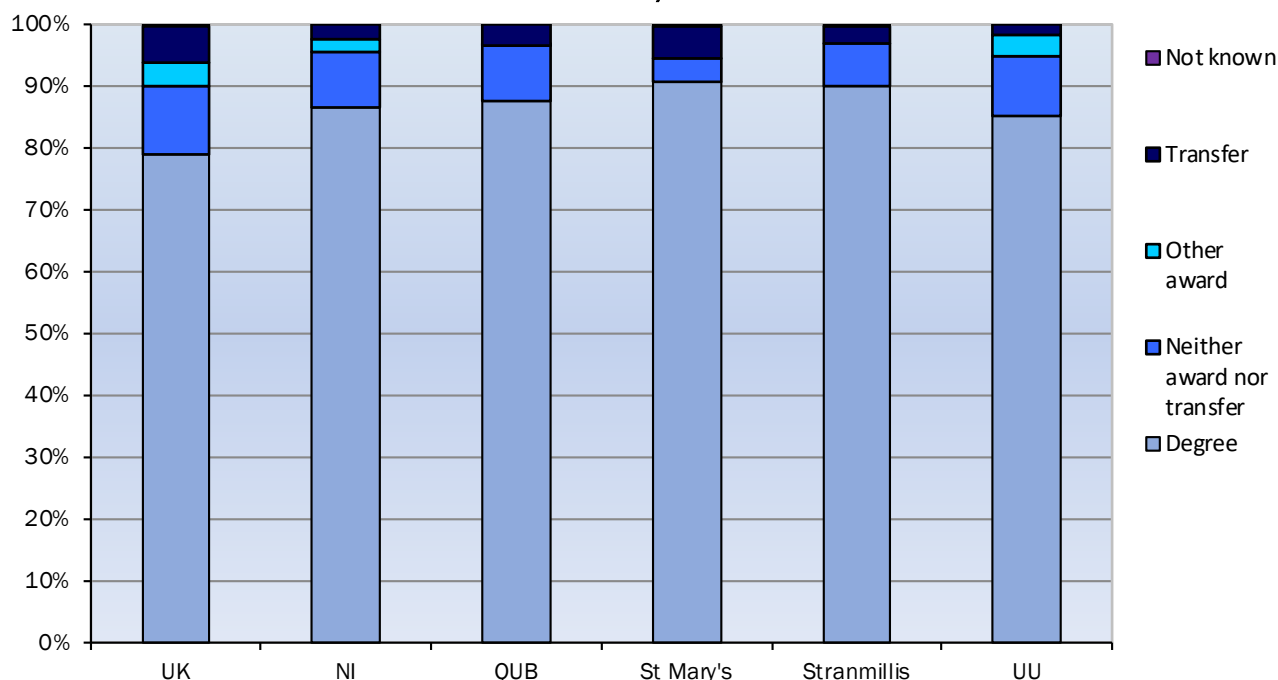
### (b) Full-time other undergraduate entrants

Due to small numbers, this indicator has not been produced for NI as a whole or for individual NI HEIs.

## Projected learning outcomes: Full-time first degree entrants – 2018/19

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 - 2018/19**



OU does not have a percentage for this indicator, as all entrants during 2018/19 were part-time.

### (a) Projected to attain a degree<sup>2</sup> (Table 5, 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 78.9%, with 86.6% of full-time students starting first degree courses in 2018/19 expected to gain a degree.

QUB (87.6%), St Mary's (90.6%), Stranmillis (90.1%) and UU (85.4%) were all projected to perform above their respective benchmarks (85.8%, 86.8%, 88.8% and 79.4%) for full-time first degree entrants expected to gain a degree.

<sup>2</sup> See [Contextual Information](#) document point 4.



**(b) Projected to finish without either gaining an award or transferring to another HEI (Table 5, 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 better than the UK average, with 8.9% of full-time first degree entrants to NI HEIs in 2018/19 projected to finish without either gaining an award or transferring to another HEI, compare with 11.1% for the UK as a whole.

On this basis, QUB (9.0%) and Stranmillis (6.7%) were projected to perform worse than their respective benchmarks (6.7% and 5.8%), whereas St Mary's (3.9%) and UU (9.4%) were projected to perform better than their respective benchmarks (6.0% and 11.1%). None of these differences were significant.

**Table 5: Percentage of full-time first degree students expected to gain a degree or to gain neither an award nor transfer – 2017/18 entrants**

Provider	Obtain degree		No award nor transfer	
	Percentage	Benchmark	Percentage	Benchmark
UK	78.9	-	11.1	-
NI	<b>86.6</b>	-	<b>8.9</b>	-
QUB	87.6	85.8	9.0	6.7
St Mary's	90.6	86.8	3.9	6.0
Stranmillis	90.1	88.8	6.7	5.8
UU	85.4	79.4	9.4	11.1

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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