

# Statistical Bulletin

## Higher Level Apprenticeships at NI FE colleges and CAFRE:

Academic years: 2017/18 to 2021/22



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Department for the Economy, 39-49 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8FD

**Contact:** Seana McIlwaine

**Telephone:** 028 90257708

**E-mail:** [seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk)

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Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to:

Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch  
Department for the Economy  
Adelaide House  
39-49 Adelaide Street  
Belfast, BT2 8FD  
Tel: +44 (0)28 90257526 or (0)28 90257708  
Email: [seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	4
ABBREVIATIONS.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	6
INTRODUCTION .....	7
<b>1. ENROLMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP STARTS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
STARTS .....	10
WHERE IS HLA PROVISION BEING DELIVERED? .....	10
STARTS BY SEX.....	11
STARTS BY AGE GROUP .....	11
STARTS BY HLA LEVEL.....	12
START DATES.....	12
STARTS BY SUBJECT AREA.....	13
STARTS BY DEPRIVATION QUINTILE .....	14
<b>3. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
PARTICIPANT PROFILE.....	15
OCCUPANCY.....	16
SECTOR SUBJECT AREA.....	17
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM).....	17
LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT (LGD) .....	18
<b>4. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PERFORMANCE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	19
SUCCESS RATE BY SEX .....	21
SUCCESS RATE BY AGE GROUP.....	21
SUCCESS RATE BY STEM INDICATOR.....	22
<b>ANNEX A: NOTES TO READERS .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Number of HLA starts, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	10
Figure 2.2: Number of HLA starts by provider, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	11
Figure 2.3: HLA starts by sex, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	11
Figure 2.4: HLA starts by age group, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	12
Figure 2.5: HLA starts by level of programme, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	12
Figure 2.6a: Number of HLA starts by starting month, 2021/22.....	13
Figure 2.6b: Cumulative total of HLA starts by starting month, 2021/22.....	13
Figure 2.7: HLA starts by the six most popular sector subject areas, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	14
Figure 2.8 Number of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	14
Figure 3.1: HLA participants by year of programme, 2021/22.....	15
Figure 3.2: HLA participants by sex, 2021/22.....	15
Figure 3.3: HLA participants by age group, 2021/22.....	15
Figure 3.4: HLA participants by level of programme, 2021/22.....	16
Figure 3.5: Occupancy of HLA participants, 2017/18 to 2021/22.....	16
Figure 3.6: HLA participants by the six most popular sector subject areas and sex, 2021/22.....	17
Figure 3.7: HLA participants by STEM indicator, 2021/22.....	18
Figure 3.8: HLA participants per 100,000 population (16 to 64 year olds) by LGD, 2021/22.....	19
Figure 4.1: Performance of HLA participants, 2018/19 to 2021/22.....	20
Figure 4.2: HLA participant success rate by sex, 2021/22.....	21
Figure 4.3: HLA participant success rate by age group, 2021/22.....	21
Figure 4.4: HLA participant success rate by STEM indicator, 2021/22.....	22

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Enrolments and participants on HLA programmes by academic year.....	9
Table 3.1: HLA participants by LGD and rate per 100,000 population aged 16 to 64 years, 2021/22.....	18
Table 4.1: Performance of final year HLA participants, 2018/19 to 2021/22.....	20

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Text</b>
BMC	Belfast Metropolitan College
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
CDR	Consolidated Data Return
DfE	Department for the Economy
FE	Further Education
FE LMS	Further Education Learner Management System
HLA	Higher Level Apprenticeship
NI	Northern Ireland
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure
NRC	Northern Regional College
NWRC	North West Regional College
RRQ	Register of Regulated Qualifications
SERC	South Eastern Regional College
SRC	Southern Regional College
SSA	Sector Subject Area
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWC	South West College

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This official statistics release presents a range of analysis on the Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) at FE colleges and CAFRE in Northern Ireland across the academic years 2017/18 to 2021/22. The statistics presented in this bulletin cover the characteristics of the participants enrolled on HLA courses and analysis of performance in terms of achievements.

### KEY POINTS:

- In academic year 2021/22, there were 609 starts on an HLA programme. This was an increase of 196 (47.5%) compared to 413 HLA starts recorded in 2020/21.
- A trend has emerged over the last five years showing more males are entering HLA programmes than females. In 2021/22, approximately three in ten starts were female; 180 females compared to 429 males.
- In total there were 1,111 participants on HLA programmes in 2021/22; this included 609 starts, 345 in year 2 and 157 in year 3.
- In 2021/22, 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (37.0%) of all HLA participants.
- The overall success rate for final year individuals in 2021/22 was 89.8% (264 participants).

## INTRODUCTION

Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision commenced at Further Education (FE) colleges in Northern Ireland in 2017/18 and at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) in 2018/19. The statistical bulletin provides key information on level 4, 5 and 6 Higher Level Apprenticeship programmes and participants for the academic years 2017/18 to 2021/22. Further Education Level 6 HLAs commenced in academic year 2021/22.

A list of qualifications levels can be accessed at [What qualification levels mean](#). The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme but will be a minimum of two years. The current frameworks can be accessed at [Higher Level Apprenticeships](#).

Statistics presented in this bulletin cover a range of topics including starts, occupancy and achievement for participants on NI HLAs.

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Northern Ireland offer Level 6 and 7 Higher Level Apprenticeships. This data is reported separately as the [HLAs at HEIs Fact Sheet](#) as the data is sourced from the [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\)](#).

## BACKGROUND

The scope of the HLA programme can be found in the policy publication '[Securing our Success - The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships](#)' (published June 2014). [Higher Level Apprenticeships \(HLAs\)](#) offer a spectrum of support from entry level up to level 8 (equivalent to a Doctorate), they facilitate lifelong learning and allow participants to move in and out of professional education and training at their own pace.

Several funding streams are available to FE colleges to deliver provision. These include direct funding from the Department for the Economy (DfE), through a mainstream mechanism or government training programmes, such as Training for Success. FE colleges can also receive funding from businesses/individuals, termed as cost recovery, or from other government departments, such as Department of Education (DE), through the Entitlement Framework programme. Most FE college provision includes courses that can potentially lead to a regulated qualification on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ); a smaller proportion are non-regulated; all HLA provision reported on in this publication are regulated courses.

A participant on an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a [core qualification](#). Where a participant has more than one enrolment their core qualification will be used for reporting purposes.

A list of key statistical publications can be found at the DfE [publication schedule](#), including those listed below:

[Further Education Statistics](#)

[ApprenticeshipsNI Statistics](#)

[Higher Education Statistics](#)

In relation to data from FE colleges, [Notes to Readers](#) provides further information on programme design and terminology used within the report. An associated [Background Quality Report](#) is also available.

This publication has been produced in accordance with the [Code of Practice](#) for Statistics, complying with the pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value and is published on an annual basis.

## **ADDITIONAL TABLES**

Detailed additional and supplementary tables are available on the DfE web page: [Higher Level Apprenticeship in Northern Ireland - academic years 2017/18 to 2021/22](#).



## 1. ENROLMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

This section focuses on Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision delivered in Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges in the academic years 2017/18 to 2021/22. CAFRE HLA data are not included in section 1. All HLA programmes reported on in this publication are regulated courses.

### PROPORTION OF HLA ENROLMENTS IN FE COLLEGES

In 2021/22, 17.6% (19,480) of all FE enrolments (110,833) were allocated to the 'Government Training' funding group, of which 1,101 (1.0% of all FE enrolments) were HLA enrolments (Tables A1 and A2).

### NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS AND INDIVIDUALS

An individual student engaged in an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification with potentially additional qualifications as part of their programme of study. Therefore, enrolment data will always be greater than or equal to the number of individuals participating in the programme.

The number of enrolments per individual is very close to one in all academic years (Table 1.1, Table A2).

**Table 1.1: Enrolments and participants on HLA programmes by academic year**

	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>Enrolments</b>	327	694	971	977	1,101
<b>Participants</b>	324	689	959	962	1,081
<b>Enrolments per participant</b>	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.02

Source: FE Learner Management System (LMS)

## 2. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP STARTS

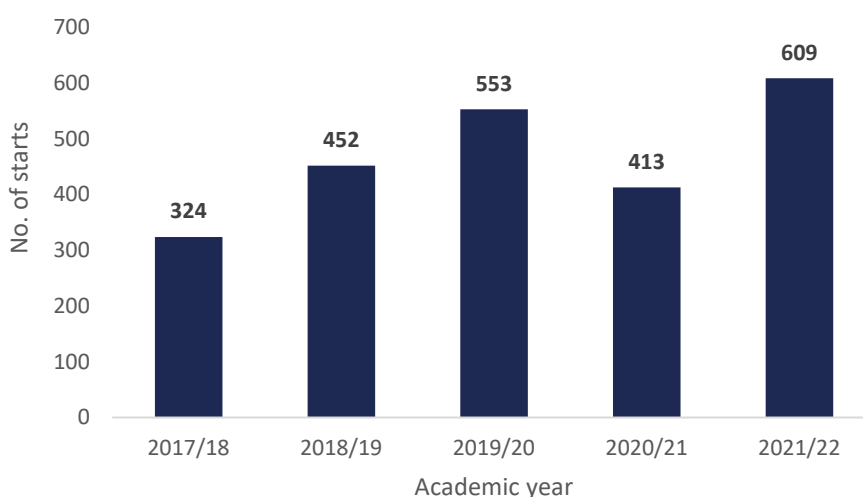
A participant on an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification. Where a participant has more than one enrolment their core qualification will be used for reporting purposes. This section provides a summary of HLA starts and comparisons over academic years.

### STARTS

HLAs provision commenced in FE colleges in 2017/18 and at CAFRE in 2018/19. In academic year 2021/22, there were 609 starts on an HLA programme. This was an increase of 196 (47.5%) compared to 413 HLA starts recorded in 2020/21 (Figure 2.1, Table B1).

There is a noticeable year on year increase in starts with the exception of 2020/21 where the decrease may be attributed to the effect of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

**Figure 2.1: Number of HLA starts, 2017/18 to 2021/22**

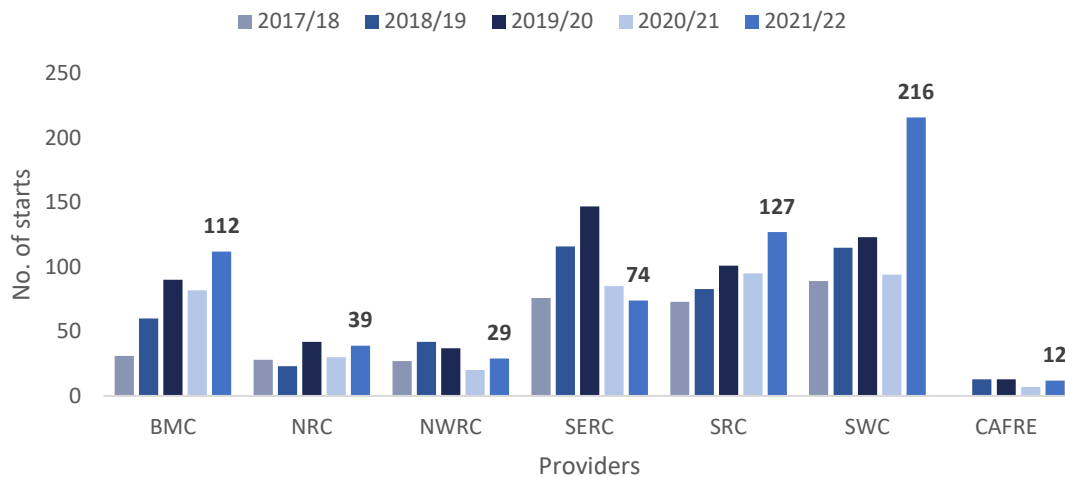


Source: FE Learner Management System (LMS), CAFRE administration system

### WHERE IS HLA PROVISION BEING DELIVERED?

In 2021/22, six of the seven providers reported an increase in the number of HLA starts compared to 2020/21. South West College (SWC) more than doubled their HLA starts, going from 94 in 2020/21 to 216 in 2021/22. SWC was also the provider to account for the largest proportion of starts (35.5%); followed by Southern Regional College (SRC) (127; 20.9%) (Figure 2.2, Table B1).

**Figure 2.2: Number of HLA starts by provider, 2017/18 to 2021/22**

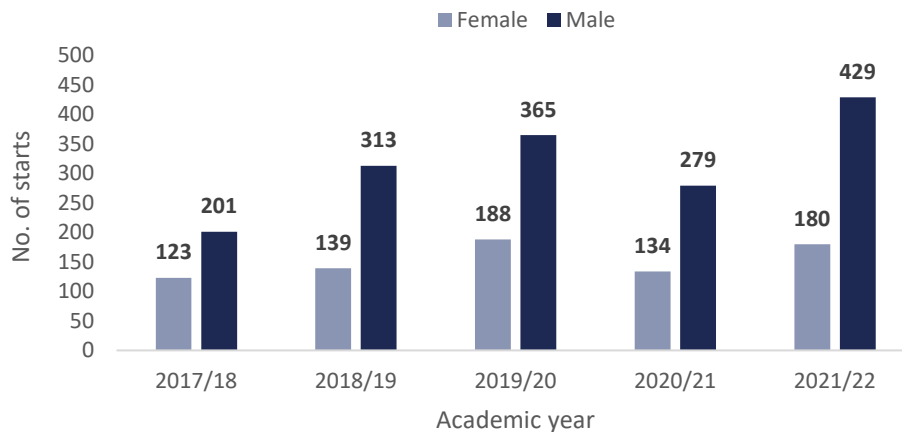


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

### STARTS BY SEX

A trend has emerged over the last five years showing more males are entering HLA programmes than females. In 2021/22, approximately three in ten starts were female; 180 females compared to 429 males (Figure 2.3, Table B2).

**Figure 2.3: HLA starts by sex, 2017/18 to 2021/22**

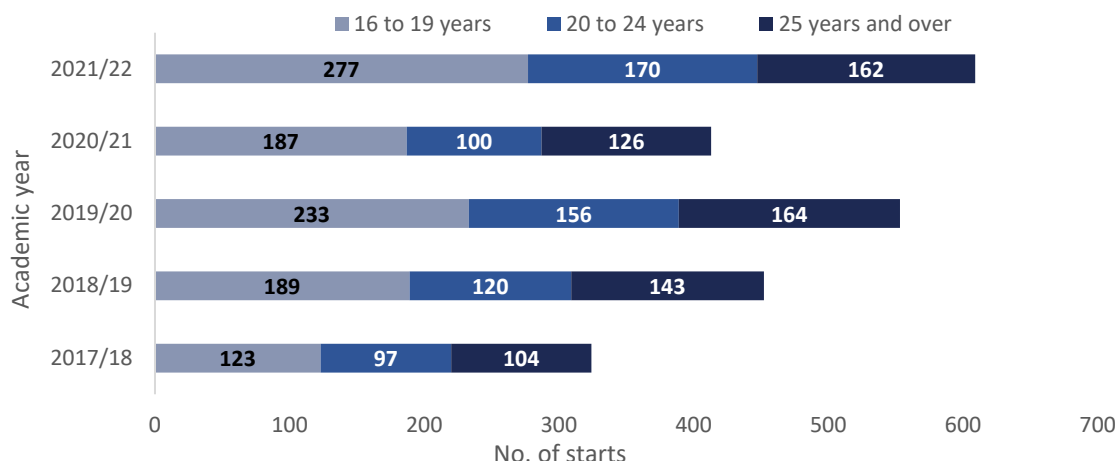


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

### STARTS BY AGE GROUP

Over the last five years the youngest age group have continued to report the highest proportion of HLA starts, there were 277 aged 16 to 19 years in 2021/22 accounting for 45.5% of starts (Figure 2.4, Table B3).

**Figure 2.4: HLA starts by age group, 2017/18 to 2021/22**

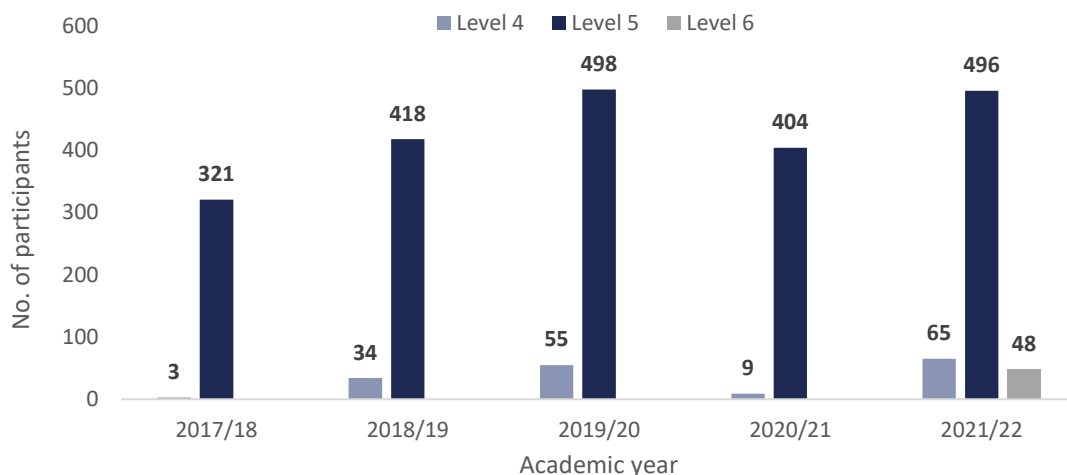


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

## STARTS BY HLA LEVEL

Figure 2.5 shows level 5 HLA programmes are the most popular in all academic years. Level 5 HLAs accounted for 81.4% of starts in 2021/22 compared to 97.8% in 2020/21. This proportionate decrease may partly be attributed to level 6 HLAs being offered at FE colleges for the first time in 2021/22; 48 individuals took up this opportunity. Level 4 HLAs also noted an annual increase, 9 in 2020/21 to 65 in 2021/22 (Figure 2.5, Table B4).

**Figure 2.5: HLA starts by level of programme, 2017/18 to 2021/22**



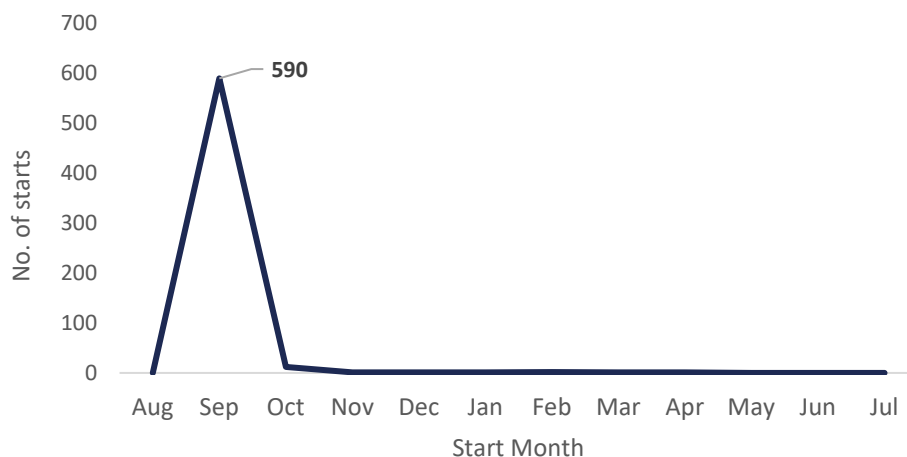
Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

## START DATES

The start date is the date on which an enrolment begins. An academic year is defined by each provider and potentially will differ across all providers. An academic year traditionally starts in September and finishes in July the following year. The number of starts by month is calculated using the last Friday of each month.

As expected, the majority of start dates are at the beginning of the academic year, with most clustered around September. There was a peak of 590 HLA starts in September 2021 (Figures 2.6a & 2.6b, Table B5).

**Figure 2.6a: Number of HLA starts by starting month, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration System

The majority of HLA participants started in September 2021 with the final count levelling off at 609.

**Figure 2.6b: Cumulative total of HLA starts by starting month, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration System

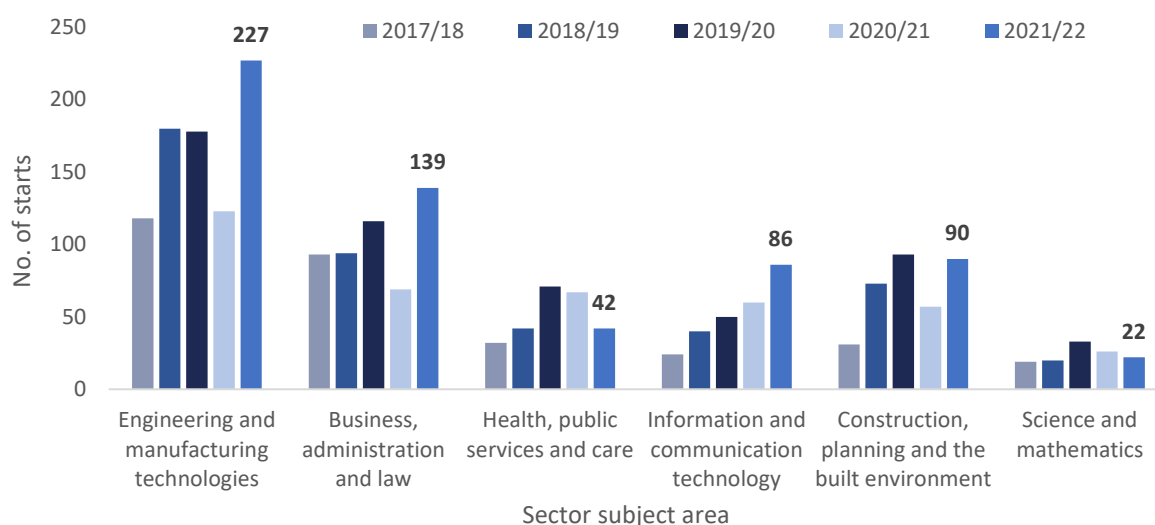
## STARTS BY SUBJECT AREA

All regulated qualifications are assigned a [Sector Subject Area \(SSA\)](#) code by the Awarding Organisation, which indicates the high level topic of the course. Within this report, the term subject area is also used for sector subject area.

Figure 2.7 shows 'Information and communication technology' was the only sector subject area to record a year on year increase in HLA starts since the programme commenced in 2017/18.

'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' remained the most popular sector subject area in 2021/22 accounting for over one third (37.3%) of HLA starts. 'Business, administration and law' was the second most popular recording 139 (22.8%) starts (Figure 2.7, Table B6).

**Figure 2.7: HLA starts by the six most popular sector subject areas, 2017/18 to 2021/22**



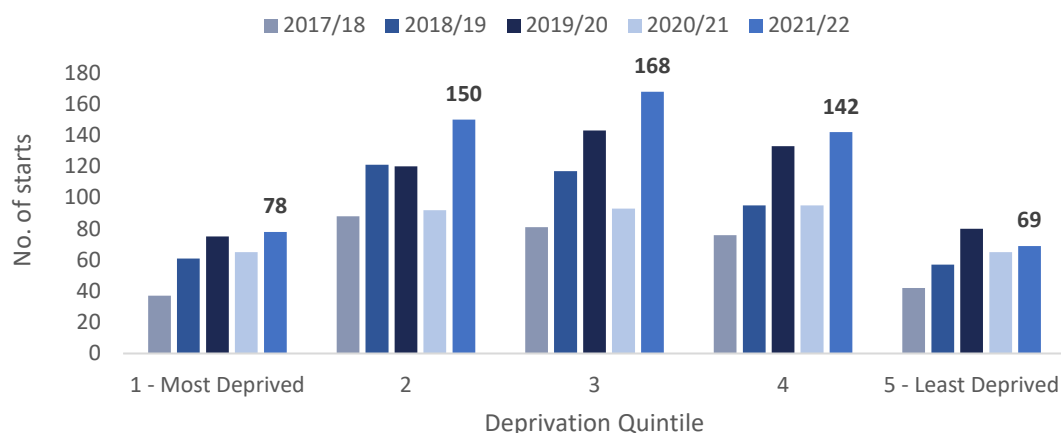
Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

### STARTS BY DEPRIVATION QUINTILE

Deprivation has been measured using the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM, 2017<sup>1</sup>), which assesses the level of deprivation of Super Output Areas (SOAs) across NI from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890). For analysis purposes these areas are categorised into five geographical groups, termed ‘quintiles’, each accounting for 20% of the 890 SOAs. Quintile 1 is the most deprived group of areas and Quintile 5 is the least deprived group of areas. Any enrolments which have either a non-NI address or no NI postcode are classified as ‘unknown’.

A similar pattern has emerged over the last five academic years showing the ‘most deprived’ and ‘least deprived’ quintiles record the lowest number of individuals starting HLAs. Figure 2.8 shows the third quintile recorded the greatest number (168) of HLA starts in 2021/22 (Table B7).

**Figure 2.8: Number of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2017/18 to 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

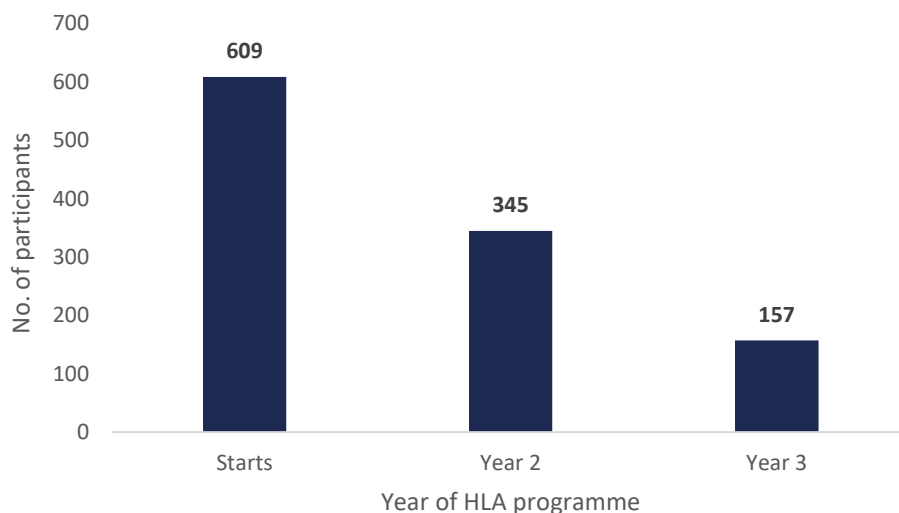
<sup>1</sup> Please note further information on Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 is available at: [NIMDM 2017](#)

### 3. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PARTICIPANTS

This section reports on the total number of individuals enrolled on HLA programmes at FE colleges and CAFRE in the academic year 2021/22, this includes participants in all years of their HLA programme. The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme, but will be a minimum of two years.

In total there were 1,111 participants on HLA programmes in 2021/22; this included 609 starts, 345 in year 2 and 157 in year 3 (Figure 3.1, Table C1).

**Figure 3.1: HLA participants by year of programme, 2021/22**

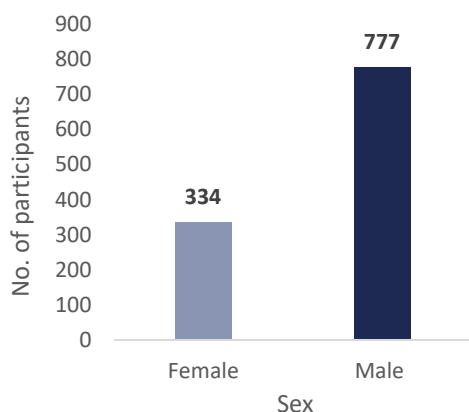


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

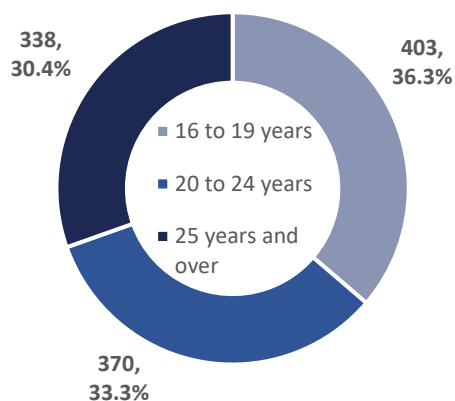
#### PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Seven in ten (69.9%) HLA individuals were male in 2021/22; there were 334 females on an HLA programme compared to 777 males (Figure 3.2, Table C2). The number of individual enrolments decreased slightly as the age group got older. There were 403 (36.3%) individuals in the youngest age group 16 to 19 years, 370 (33.3%) aged 20 to 24 years and 338 (30.4%) in the group aged 25 years and over (Figure 3.3, Table C3)

**Figure 3.2: HLA participants by sex, 2021/22**



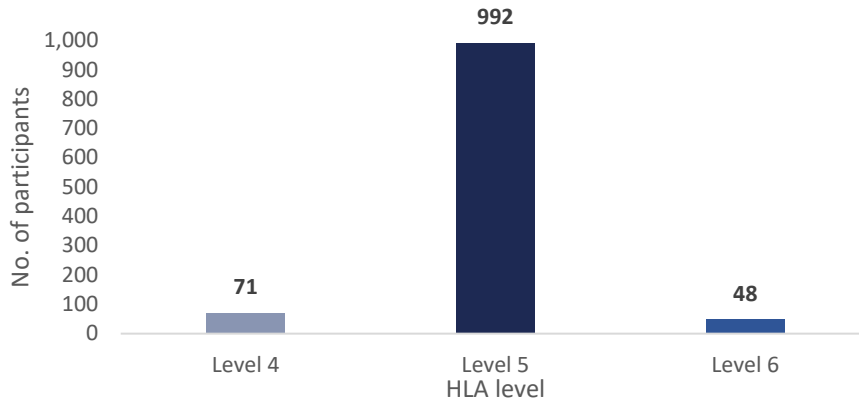
**Figure 3.3: HLA participants by age group, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

The majority (89.3%) of participants were studying a level 5 programme in 2021/22. There were 71 participants on a level 4 HLA and 48 on a level 6. Level 6 HLAs were offered at FE colleges for the first time in 2021/22 (Figure 3.4, Table C4).

**Figure 3.4: HLA participants by level of programme, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

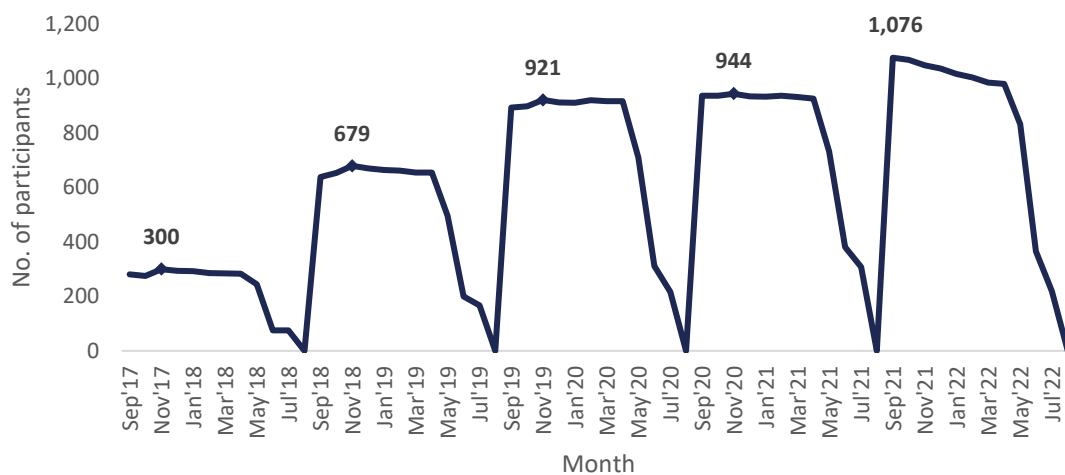
## OCCUPANCY

The occupancy level of HLA programmes is the number of continuing or active participants at a particular point in time. The HLA programme began in 2017/18 and as HLAs are a minimum of two years, there is a cumulative effect for the number of participants on programme from 2018/19.

Figure 3.5 (Table C5) shows the total occupancy level on the last Friday of each month from 2017/18 to 2021/22. The number of participants filter off to zero in August as the academic year ends and then increase again in September as registration begins for the new academic year.

Figure 3.5 shows the total number of participants on HLA programmes peaks in September 2021, recording 1,076 participants.

**Figure 3.5: Occupancy of HLA participants, 2017/18 to 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system



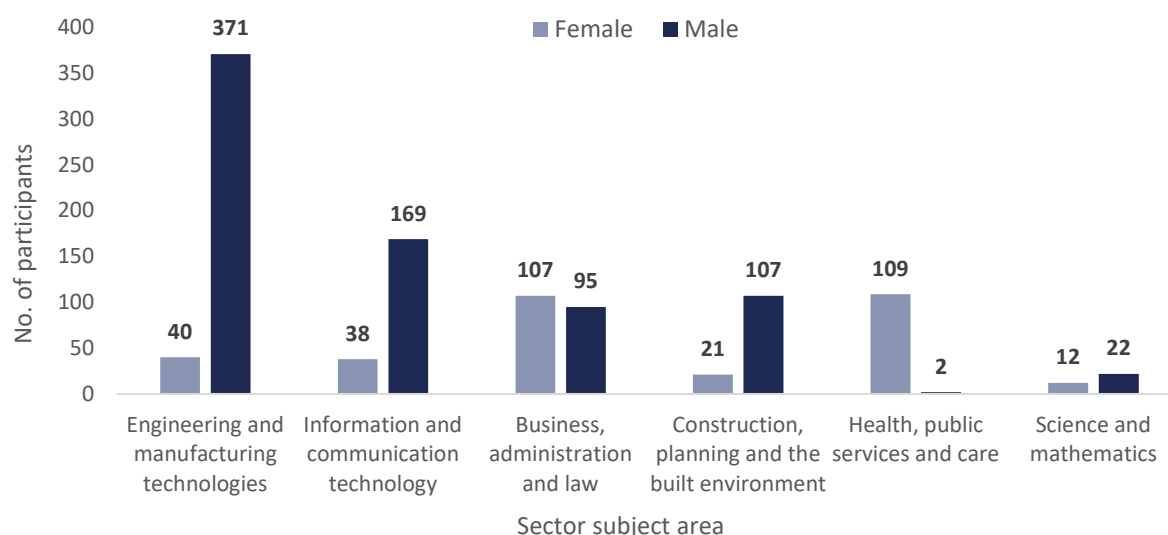
## SECTOR SUBJECT AREA

Figure 3.6 shows the sex breakdown for the six most popular HLA sector subject areas. Although overall there are more male participants on HLAs; it highlights the areas of HLA choices of males and females.

In 2021/22, 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (37.0%) of all HLA participants. This subject area recorded a notable difference across sex; 12.0% (40) of female HLA participants were studying in this area compared to 47.7% (371) of males.

The second most popular subject area was 'Information and communication technology' (18.6%). This area was more popular with males; 21.8% (169) of male HLA participants were studying an HLA in this area compared to 11.4% (38) of females (Figure 3.6, Table C6).

**Figure 3.6: HLA participants by the six most popular sector subject areas and sex, 2021/22**

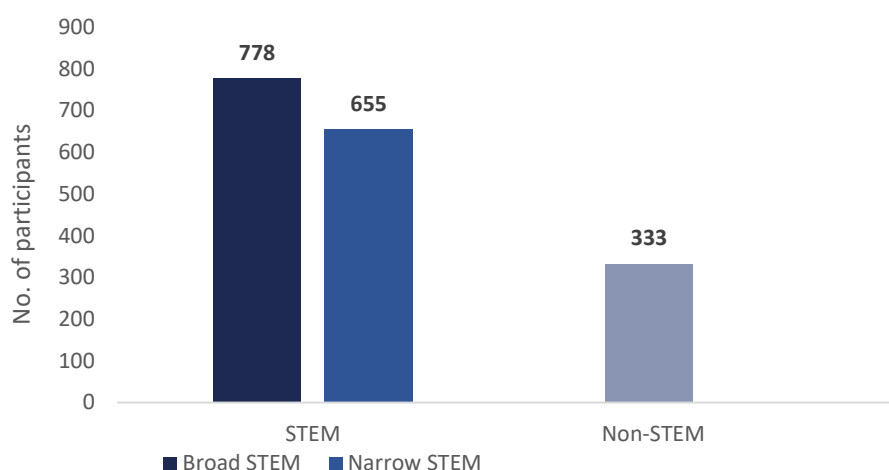


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM)

In 2021/22, seven in ten (70.0%) participants were studying HLA programmes in broad STEM areas, 778 participants. This reduced to 655 (59.0%) for narrow STEM and there were 333 (30.0%) participants studying an HLA in a non-STEM related area (Figure 3.7, Table C7).

**Figure 3.7: HLA participants by STEM indicator, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

Note: Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT (LGD)

In 2021/22, the Local Government District (LGD) Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon recorded the highest (204) number of participants on an HLA and Antrim and Newtownabbey the lowest (49). Comparing the numbers against the economically active population (those aged 16 to 64 years) using mid year population estimates, Table 3.1 shows Mid Ulster recorded the highest rate per 100,000 population (203.8) and Belfast had the lowest (42.6); (Figure 3.8, Table 3.1 and Table C8).

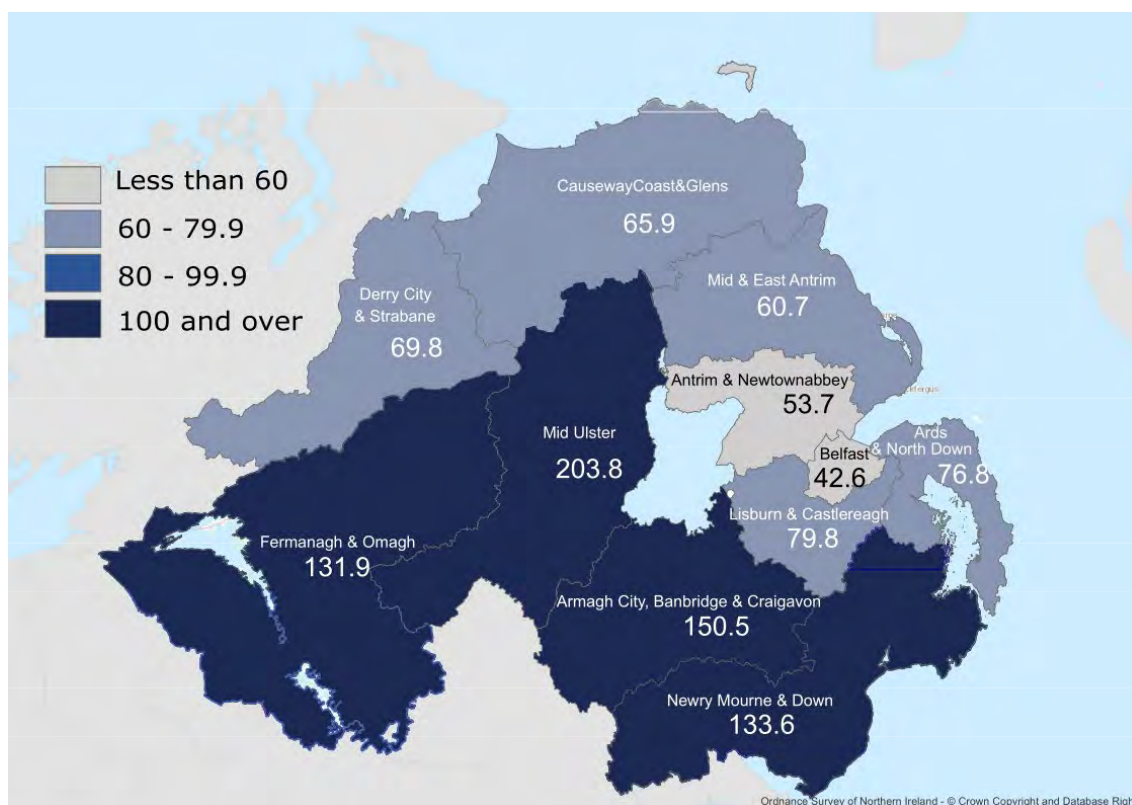
**Table 3.1: HLA participants by LGD and rate per 100,000 population aged 16 to 64 years, 2021/22**

Local Government Districts (LGD)	No. of participants on HLAs	Mid Year population estimates, 2021	Rate per 100,000 population aged 16 to 64 years
Antrim and Newtownabbey	49	91,320	53.7
Ards and North Down	75	97,692	76.8
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	204	135,546	150.5
Belfast	97	227,883	42.6
Causeway Coast and Glens	57	86,512	65.9
Derry City and Strabane	66	94,602	69.8
Fermanagh and Omagh	93	70,503	131.9
Lisburn and Castlereagh	74	92,691	79.8
Mid and East Antrim	52	85,655	60.7
Mid Ulster	190	93,219	203.8
Newry, Mourne and Down	149	111,550	133.6
Unknown	5	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,111</b>	<b>1,187,173</b>	<b>93.6</b>

Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

[NISRA Mid Year Population Estimates](#)

**Figure 3.8: HLA participants per 100,000 population (16 to 64 year olds) by LGD, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system  
NISRA Mid Year Population Estimates

## 4. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PERFORMANCE

A student can enrol on a course that is multiple years in length, but will typically only have the opportunity to obtain the qualification in final year of the course. This section focuses on final year participants only. It will explore the performance (retention, achievement and success) of final year HLA participants in academic year 2021/22.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Gaining a qualification includes only those with full achievement. Partial achievements are not included in this analysis.

In academic year 2021/22, 294 HLA participants entered final year; 290 completed final year and 264 gained their final year qualification (Table 4.1, Table D1).

#### Retention Rate

Retention rate is defined as the percentage of final year HLA participants who completed the HLA programme.

The overall retention rate for final year participants in 2021/22 was 98.6% (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

#### Achievement Rate

Achievement rate relates to the percentage of final year completed HLA participants who achieve an HLA qualification.

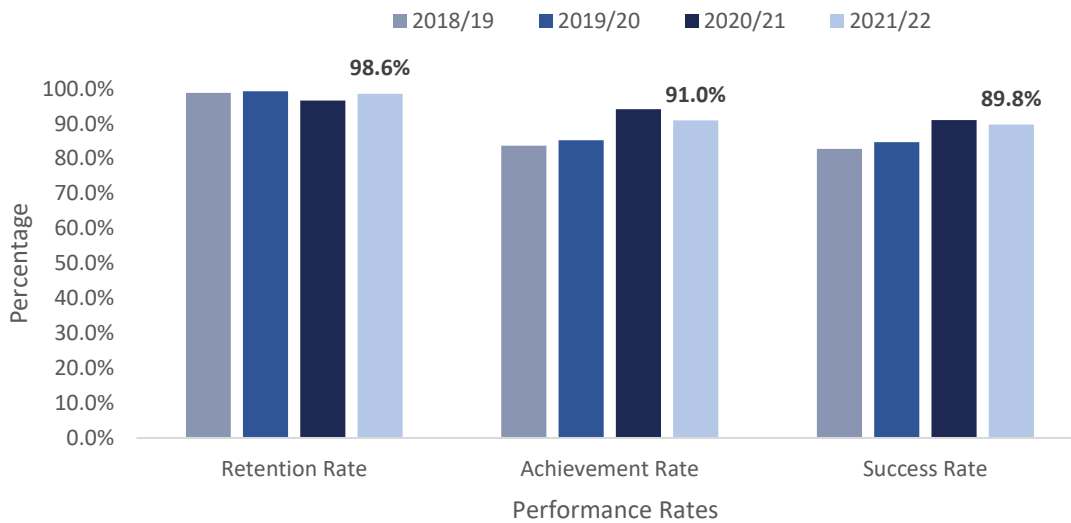
The overall achievement rate for final year individuals in 2021/22 was 91.0% (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

## Success Rate

Success rate is recognised as the overall measure of performance, which is the percentage of final year participants on the HLA programme who complete and achieve a qualification.

The overall success rate for final year individuals in 2021/22 was 89.8% (264 participants) (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

**Figure 4.1: Performance of HLA participants, 2018/19 to 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

**Table 4.1 : Performance of final year HLA participants, 2018/19 to 2021/22**

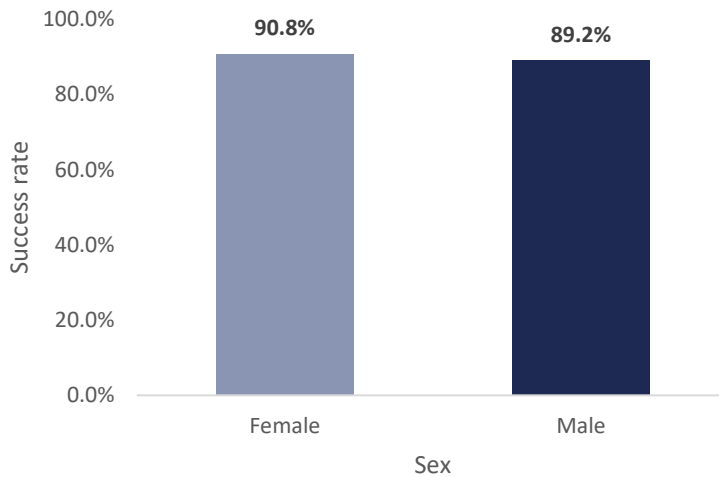
Year	Final Year Enrolment	Final Year Completer	Retention Rate	Final Year Achievement	Achievement Rate	Success Rate
<b>2021/22</b>	294	290	<b>98.6%</b>	264	<b>91.0%</b>	<b>89.8%</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	393	380	<b>96.7%</b>	358	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>91.1%</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	301	299	<b>99.3%</b>	255	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	180	178	<b>98.9%</b>	149	<b>83.7%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>

Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

## SUCCESS RATE BY SEX

The success rate for females and males was very similar; 90.8% of females and 89.2% of males in their final year successfully gained their HLA qualification (Figure 4.2, Table D2).

**Figure 4.2: HLA participant success rate by sex, 2021/22**

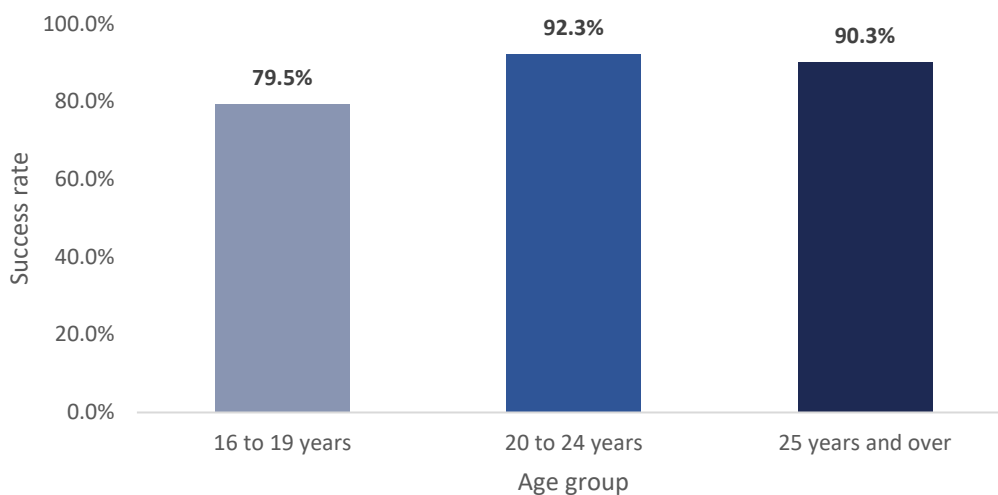


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

## SUCCESS RATE BY AGE GROUP

Those aged 16 to 19 years reported the lowest success rate, 79.5%, although it is important to note the numbers in this age group are much lower. The 20 to 24 age group reported a success rate at 92.3% and the 25 and over 90.3%; (Figure 4.3, Table D3).

**Figure 4.3: HLA participant success rate by age group, 2021/22**

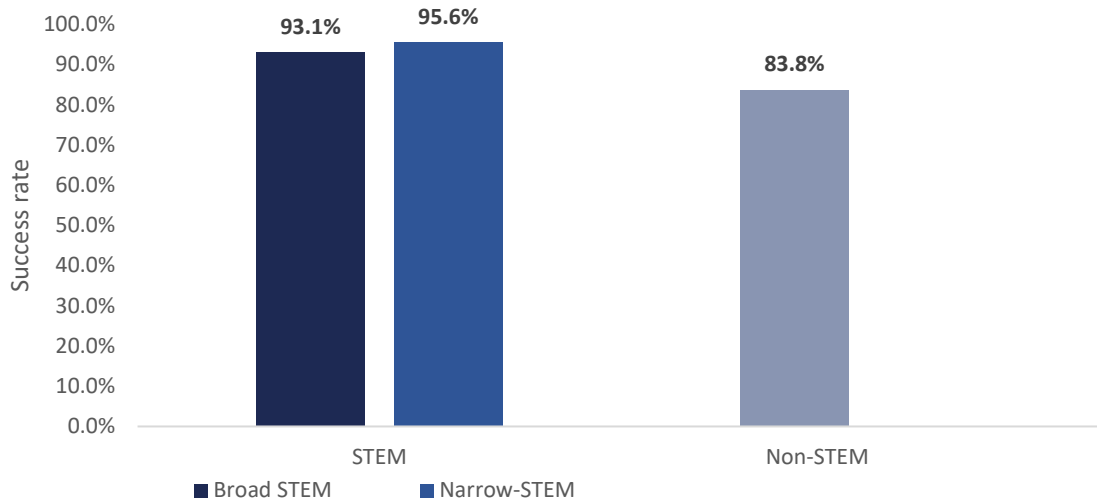


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

## SUCCESS RATE BY STEM INDICATOR

The success rate was higher in Broad STEM (93.1%) and Narrow STEM (95.6%) areas compared to Non-STEM areas (83.8%); (Figure 4.4, Table D4).

**Figure 4.4: HLA participant success rate by STEM indicator, 2021/22**



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

Note: Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

## ANNEX A: NOTES TO READERS

### SOURCE OF DATA

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the statistical returns listed below:

1. The FE colleges submit an electronic data return from the live FE Learner Management system (FE LMS) called the Consolidated Data return (CDR). The CDR came into operation for the 2013/14 academic year and is used for analysis related to the years 2017/18 and 2021/22. Each of the data returns are computerised data files consisting of individual records for each enrolment recorded by FE colleges during each academic year. Data is validated before the files are distributed to DfE. Data is sourced from Northern Ireland's six FE colleges; they operate across over 40 campuses and through over 400 outreach community locations. The six FE colleges are:

- Belfast Metropolitan College – BMC
- Northern Regional College – NRC
- North West Regional College - NWRC
- South Eastern Regional College - SERC
- Southern Regional College – SRC
- South West College - SWC

Please refer to [DfE's role in further education](#) for further detail about FE colleges in Northern Ireland.

2. CAFRE data return – this is an extract of data provided directly from the CAFRE administrative database. Numbers are relatively small and data can be validated with CAFRE administrators.

### REVISIONS

Over time as more information becomes available, it is possible figures may be revised to improve quality and accuracy. Users will be informed of any revisions to the data.

#### 2018/19 revision

The method for counting occupancy has been revised from 2017/18 therefore there are some small differences in the data reported in the 2017/18 bulletin and the 2018/19 bulletin. The data published in 2017/18 included only those HLA participants that were continuing at October 2018. This has been revised to include starts as they join the HLA programme and exclude participants only as they exit the HLA programme.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Academic Year

An academic year period is defined by each provider and potentially will differ across all providers. An academic year traditionally starts in September and finishes in July the following year.

#### Age

Age is calculated at the 1<sup>st</sup> July of the previous academic year, based on the start date of the course.

## Core Qualification

The core qualification is the qualification undertaken by the learner that is classed as the main component of their programme of study. The list of core qualifications undertaken in each academic year is presented in the table below.

Core Qualification Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
ACCA Applied Skills HLA Level 6					✓
Accounting Technicians Ireland Certificate/Diploma for Accounting Technicians	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Cyber Security and Networking Infrastructure		✓	✓	✓	✓
BSc (Hons) Cyber Security and Networking Infrastructure					✓
Foundation Degree in Business Management			✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Civil Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Cloud and Application Development		✓	✓	✓	✓
BSc (Hons) Software Cloud and Application Development					✓
Foundation Degree in Computing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Digital Marketing, Advertising & Communications			✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Energy Environment and Sustainability			✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Manufacturing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Architectural Engineering and Energy	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Food and Drink Manufacture		✓	✓	✓	✓
BSc Hons - Food and Drink Manufacture					✓
Foundation degree in Digital Construction					✓
Foundation Degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Chemical Sciences)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Life Sciences)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Computing Infrastructure	✓	✓	✓		
Foundation Degree in Science in Construction Engineering with Surveying	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



<b>Core Qualification Title</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Foundation Degree in Science in Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms			✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in International Hospitality & Tourism Management	✓	✓		✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Software Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IMI Level 4 Certificate in Advanced Automotive Studies		✓	✓		
IMI Level 5 Diploma in Automotive Management (VRQ)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
LCL Level 4 Certificate in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing	✓	✓			
Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development (Management) (Wales and Northern Ireland)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Construction and the Built Environment		✓	✓	✓	✓
Pearson Edexcel Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Adults' Management) Wales and Northern Ireland		✓	✓		
Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland)				✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Building Services & Sustainable Energy				✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Supply Chain and Logistics					✓
GQA Level 4 Diploma in Print Leadership					✓
Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Engineering					✓
BEng (Hons) Degree in Engineering					✓
Foundation Degree in Transport and Supply Chain Management					✓

## Data Sources

The information presented in this statistical bulletin has been derived from Consolidated Data return (CDR) provided by FE Colleges from the live LMS and the College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) administration system.

## Enrolments

The FE enrolment figures are simply a count of the number of enrolment records within the FE data return.

## **Final year**

A student can enrol on a course that is multiple years in length, but those in their last year are regarded as 'final year', for example participants on a one year course or the second year of a two year course.

## **Final year completers**

Those in their final year of a course and who do not withdraw from their course are regarded as final year completers.

## **Final year achievements**

Those in their final year of a course who have completed the course and subsequently achieved are regarded as final year achievements.

## **Funding streams**

Enrolments delivered through FE colleges can be funded through several funding streams. Enrolments funded by the HLA programme within FE Colleges in Northern Ireland are classified as 'Government Training' within the funding group. For further information [see Section 1.3 within FE Activity publication.](#)

## **Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) programme**

The purpose of the HLA programme is to increase skills levels and raise employer productivity. They provide a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway, focused on the skills needed by the local economy, with opportunities for the apprentice to work towards an internationally recognised qualification.

## **Level**

If the FE college enrolment is level 3 or below and is regulated, then the level is derived from the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ). If the enrolment is not part of the RRQ, the level is based on the information entered against the enrolment by the FE College. Each regulated qualification has a level between entry level and level 8. Further information can be accessed at [what qualification levels mean.](#)

## **Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Quintile 2017**

The analysis presented in the supplementary tables utilises five groups or quintiles of super output areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. These five groups are determined based on level of relative deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

The [NISRA website](#) provides further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland.

## **Occupancy**

The volume of FE college enrolments which are actively continuing on their course at a particular point in the academic year.

## **Qualifications**

Qualifications are counted for those final year enrolments in regulated courses at FE Colleges. A student can either fully or partially achieve as well as fail their qualification.

## Performance Rates

**Retention rate** is defined as the percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students. Those who complete their course early (and recorded in the data as a withdrawal) and who have subsequently achieved their programme of study qualification have been regarded as a 'completer'.

**Achievement rate** relates to the percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students who achieve a qualification.

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

## Programme of Study

The programme of study is the individual or group of qualifications from the approved curriculum for the HLA. This includes, as a minimum, the most relevant vocational qualification at level 4 or higher (core qualification), additional qualifications requested by employers.

## Regulated enrolments

Regulated qualifications are those that are reviewed, recognised and monitored by the regulatory bodies in order to make sure that they meet specific criteria and quality standards. Traditionally, 'Regulated enrolments' are regarded as enrolments on:

- qualifications at 'level 3 or below' which appear on the [Register of Regulated Qualifications \(RRQ\)](#) or part of the Department's Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications (PLAQ/Access list), and;
- Higher Education qualifications (at 'level 4 or above') includes Vocational Qualifications Levels 4 to 8.

## Rounding

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

## Sector Subject Area

For regulated provision delivered in the FE sector, the [Sector Subject Area](#) (SSA) code is derived from the official OFQUAL Register of Regulated Qualifications based on the qualification or unit code.

## STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

STEM provision is identified by the subject code entered by the FE College. If the subject code starts with a letter between A and K (Medicine, Dentistry and Allied Subjects; Biological and Physical Sciences; Agriculture; Mathematics and IT; Engineering and Technology; Architecture, Building and Planning) then it is regarded as 'Broad' STEM. 'Narrow' STEM is those enrolment records with a subject code starting with a letter C, F, G, H or J (Biological and Physical Sciences; Mathematics and IT; Engineering and Technology).

## Section 75 categories

Equality related data, such as community background, disability and ethnicity, are self-reported by the student during the data capture process within FE colleges. This information is available within the supplementary tables S1 to S7.

Dependent counts are based on individual questions, which is self-reported by the student, if they have any dependents which are adults, children or a person with a disability (Table S1).

Disability is determined by the response to the question '*Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?*' (Table S2).

## FURTHER ENQUIRIES

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

Seana McIlwaine  
Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch  
Department for the Economy  
Adelaide House  
39-49 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8FD

Telephone: 028 9025 7708  
E-mail: [seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk)

**Media enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office:**

Department for the Economy  
Adelaide House  
39-49 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8FD

Email: [pressoffice@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@economy-ni.gov.uk)

The Executive Information Service operates an out of hours service **for media enquiries only** between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted on 028 9037 8110.

This statistical bulletin and other statistical bulletins published by Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch are available to download free from the internet at:

[Higher and further education training statistics](#)