

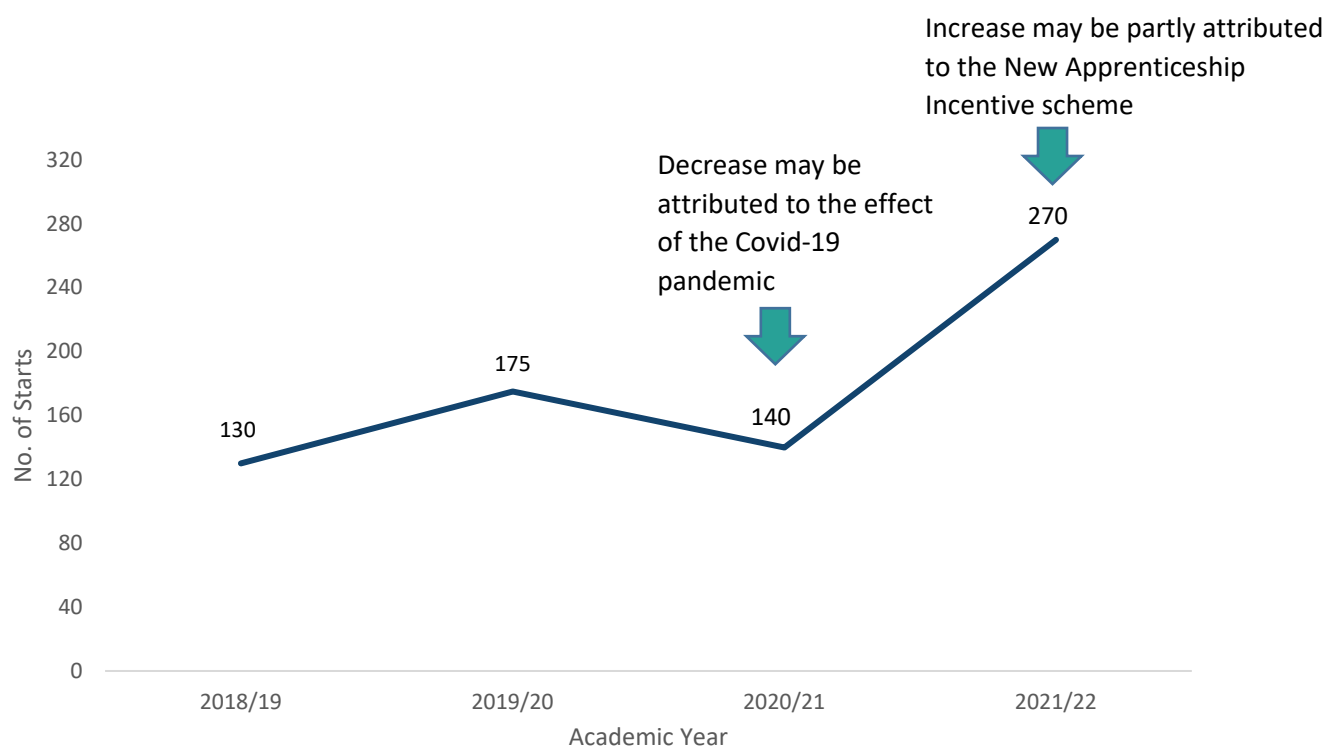
Statistical Fact Sheet - Higher Level Apprenticeships at Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland, academic year 2021/22

This official statistics release is an addendum to the [Higher Level Apprenticeship bulletin at FE colleges](#). It includes details of the characteristics, subject areas and achievements of participants on level 6 and level 7 Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) delivered at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Northern Ireland (NI). Department for the Economy (DfE) funded HLAs were first introduced at HEIs in 2018/19; the latest available data is for academic year 2021/22.

1. Starts¹

In academic year 2021/22, 270 starts commenced HLA programmes at HEIs in NI, this is almost double the number of starts in 2020/21 (140). This increase may be attributed to a recovery from the effect of Covid-19 and the New Apprenticeship Incentive scheme² which was set up as a response to the pandemic to provide financial support to employers who create new apprenticeship places (Figure 1.1, Table A1).

Figure 1.1: HLA Starts at HEIs, 2018/19 to 2021/22



Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

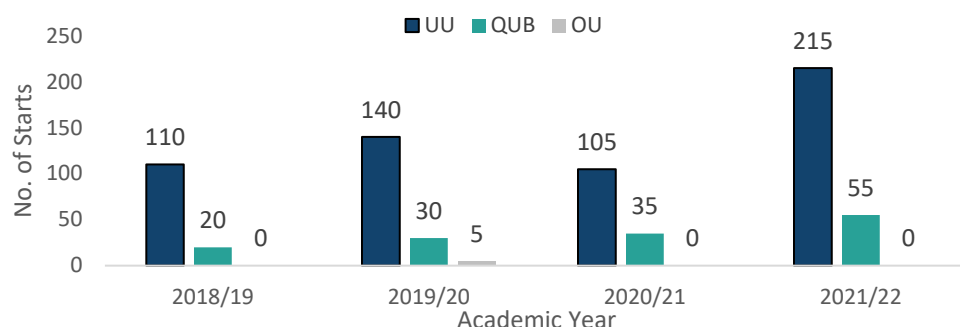
Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

¹ Starts are defined as individuals who have joined a HLA programme in a particular academic year regardless of the year of study they are on. For the purpose of this analysis HLA starts are treated as being in the first year of their HLA programme which may not correspond with their year of study.

² [Coronavirus: New Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme](#)

The uptake of HLAs continues to be greatest at Ulster University (UU); in 2021/22 they recorded 215 HLA starts and Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) recorded 55 (Figure 1.2, Table A1).

Figure 1.2: HLA Starts at HEIs by provider, 2018/19 to 2021/22

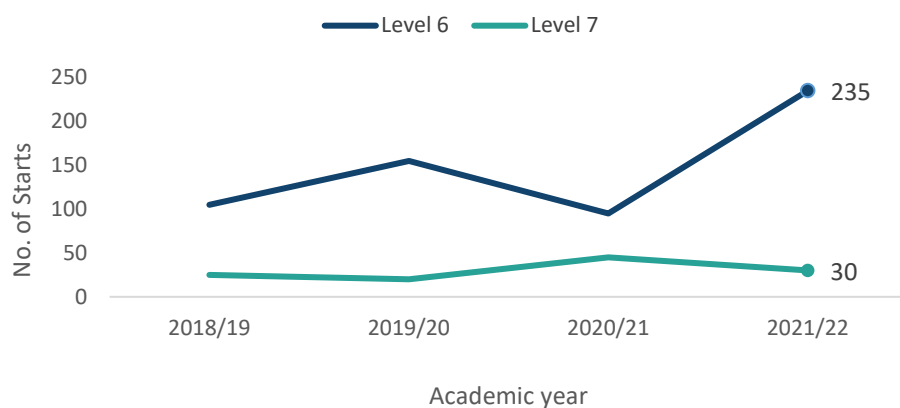


Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

There has been a greater uptake of level 6 HLA starts compared to level 7 since HLAs commenced at HEIs and this has continued into 2021/22. There were 235 level 6 HLA starts and 30 level 7 (Figure 1.3, Table A2).

Figure 1.3: HLA Starts at HEIs by level, 2018/19 to 2021/22



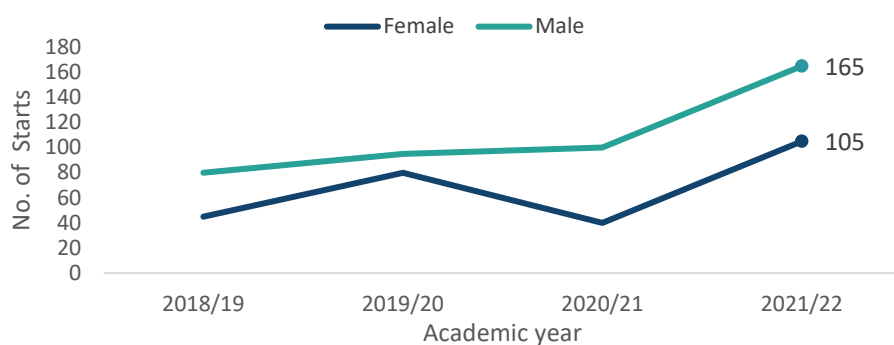
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

Profile of Starts

In 2021/22, both female and male HLA starts at HEIs reported an increase over the year; there were 105 females and 165 males compared to 40 and 100 respectively in 2020/21 (Figure 1.4). There were approximately four female starts for every six males (Figure 1.4, Table A3).

Figure 1.4: HLA Starts at HEIs by sex, 2018/19 to 2021/22

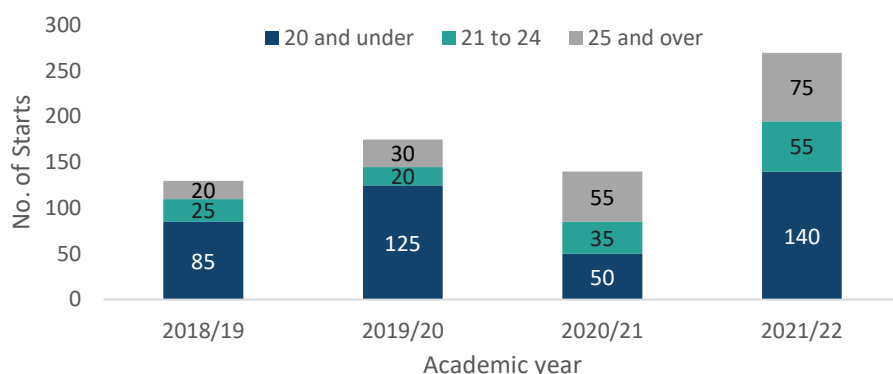


Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

Over half (52%) of HLA starts were in the age group 20 years and under, 20% were aged 21 to 24 years and 28% were aged 25 years and over in 2021/22 (Figure 1.5, Table A4).

Figure 1.5: HLA Starts at HEIs by age group, 2018/19 to 2021/22



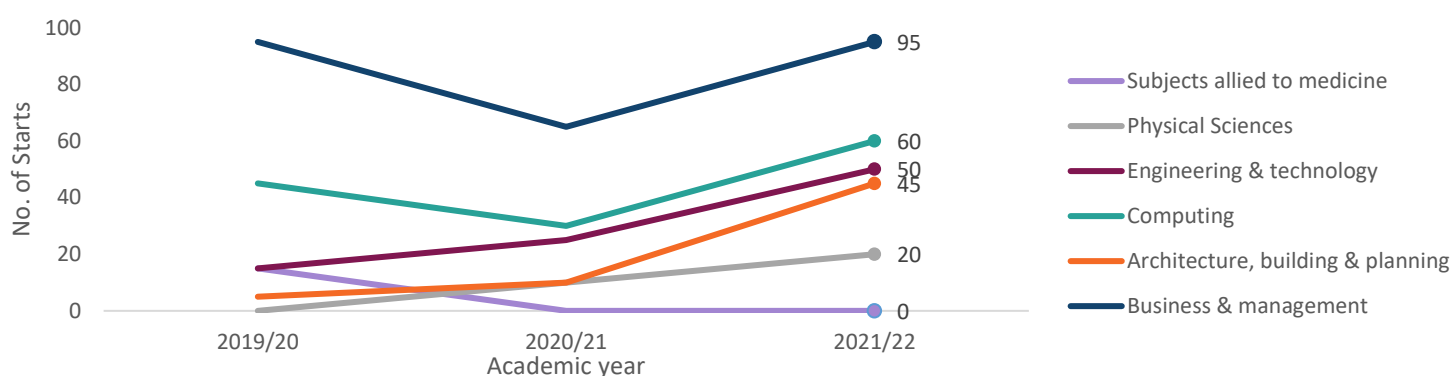
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

Subject Area

In 2021/22, there was an annual increase in all HLA subject areas where starts were recorded. Business and management was the most popular subject area, it accounted for 35% of starts on HLA programmes at HEIs. The numbers for Computing; the second most popular subject area, doubled over the year from 30 to 60 students (Figure 1.6, Table A5).

Figure 1.6: HLA starts at HEIs by subject area, 2019/20 to 2021/22



Source: HESA

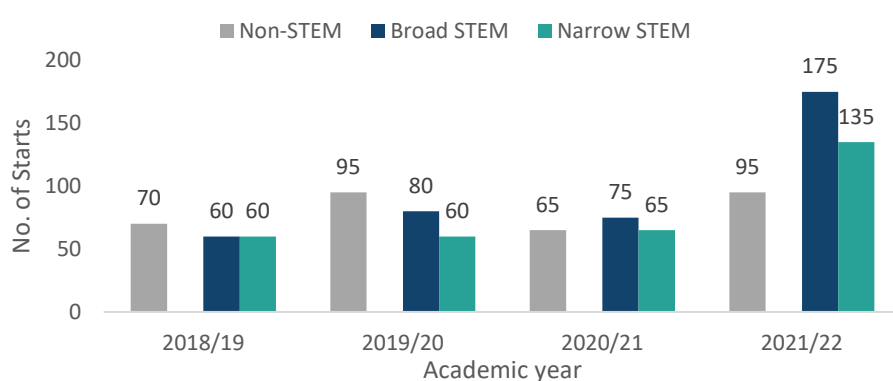
Note: Data is rounded to nearest 5. In 2019/20 a new subject coding system was introduced, therefore there is no comparable 2018/19 data.

See notes on [subject coding](#).

STEM

In 2021/22, Broad STEM and Narrow STEM (a subset of Broad STEM) reported the highest number of HLA Starts to date; just under two-thirds (65%) of starts fell into Broad STEM subjects. 2021/22 was the first year to record more Narrow STEM HLA starts than Non-STEM (Figure 1.7, Table A6).

Figure 1.7: HLA starts at HEIs by STEM indicator, 2018/19 to 2021/22



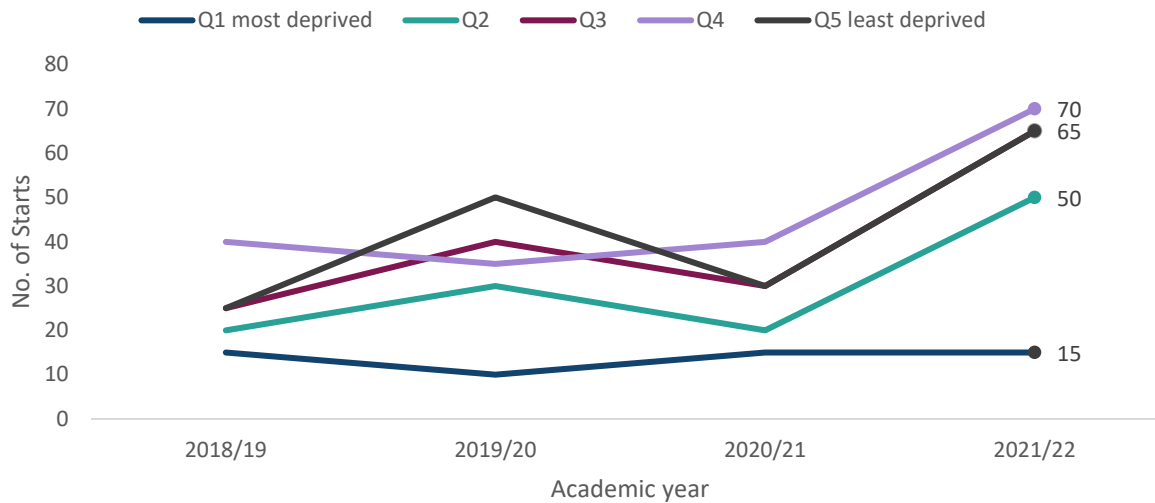
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5, Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM.

Deprivation quintile

The most deprived quintile has consistently recorded the lowest number of HLA starts at HEIs since the programme began; they accounted for only 6% of HLA starts in 2021/22. The other four deprivation quintiles recorded significant increases in starts from 2020/21 to 2021/22 (Figure 1.8, Table A7).

Figure 1.8: NI domiciled HLA starts at HEIs by deprivation quintile, 2018/19 to 2021/22



Source: HESA

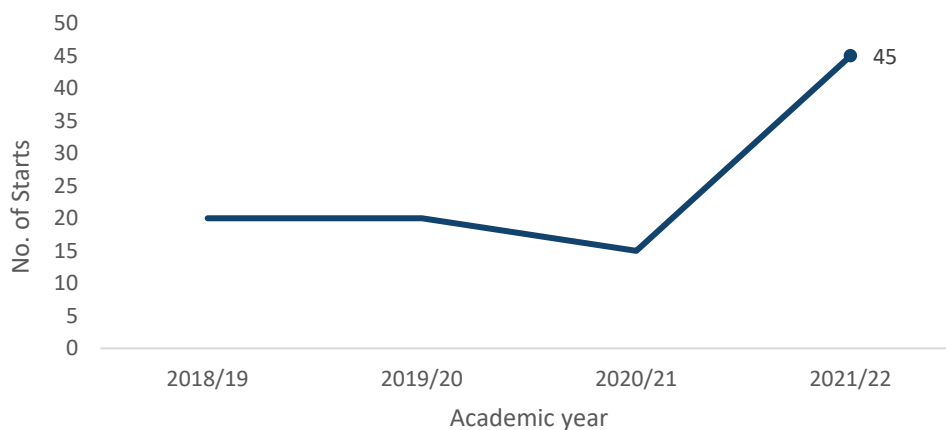
Notes: Data is rounded to nearest 5. NIMDM (2017) is only available for NI domiciled students.

10X Economy

In May 2021 the Department for the Economy (DfE) published its new economic vision, [“10X Economy: Northern Ireland’s Decade of Innovation”](#).

Three separate pillars have been identified within the 10X Vision for Northern Ireland, covering innovation led, inclusive and sustainable growth. 10X metrics have been established within each pillar to measure success; Figure 1.9 feeds into a Tier 2 metric within the Inclusive Growth pillar. The full detail of each of the 10x metrics is available in the [Measuring Success - 10X Metrics to achieve a 10X Economy - baseline report](#).

Figure 1.9: Female HLA starts at HEIs by Narrow STEM indicator, 2018/19 to 2021/22



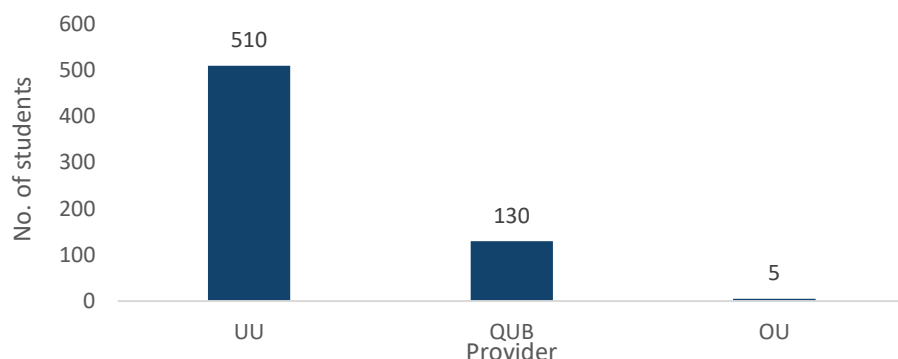
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5, Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

2. HLA Students (all years on programme)

In 2021/22 there were 650 students completing level 6 and 7 HLAs at HEIs. The majority (78%) of these were attending Ulster University (Figure 2.1, Table B1). There was a total of 270 starts; 130 in year 2, 160 in year 3 and 90 in year 4 of an HLA programme (Table B1). It is important to note a student's year on a HLA programme does not always correspond with the student's year of study.

Figure 2.1: HLA students at HEIs by Provider, 2021/22



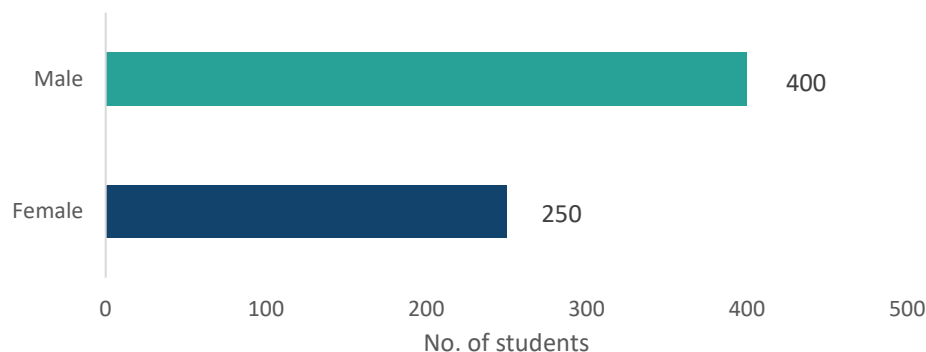
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

Student Profile

Approximately four in ten (38%) HLA students at NI HEIs were female in 2021/22; there were 250 female students compared to 400 males (Figure 2.2, Table B2).

Figure 2.2: HLA students at HEIs by sex, 2021/22

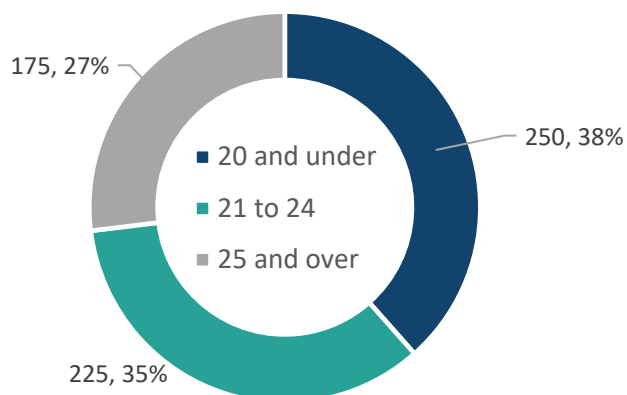


Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5.

Thirty-eight percent of HLA students at HEIs were aged 20 and under, 35% were aged 21 to 24 and 27% fell into the 25 and over age group (Figure 2.3, Table B3).

Figure 2.3: HLA participants at HEIs by age group, 2021/22



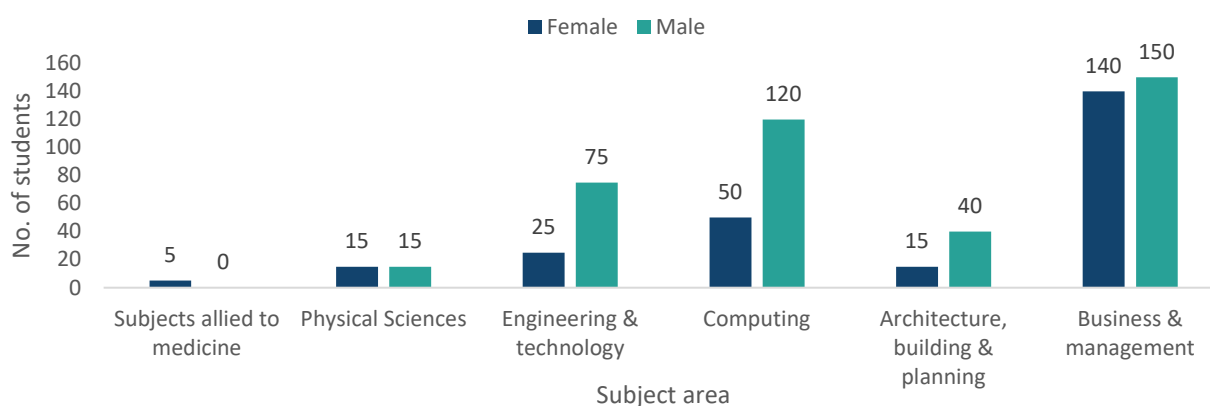
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Subject Area

The most popular subject area for HLAs at HEIs was 'Business and management', 44% of the HLA students were completing an HLA in this subject area. This subject area is popular with both females and males; 140 and 150 students respectively (Figure 2.4, Table B2).

Figure 2.4: HLA participants at HEIs by subject area and sex, 2021/22



Source: HESA

Notes: Data is rounded to nearest 5.

In 2021/22 the number of HLA students completing Broad STEM (56%) subjects was greater than that of Non-STEM (44%) (Figure 2.5, Table B4).

Figure 2.5: HLA participants at HEIs by STEM Indicator, 2021/22



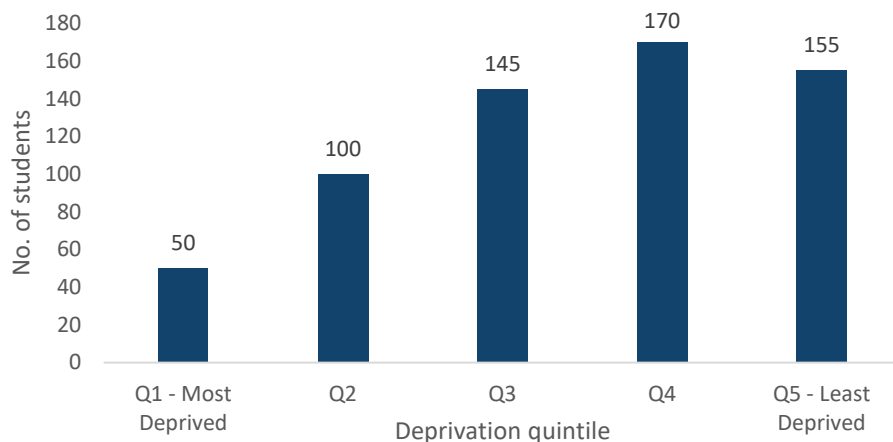
Source: HESA

Note: Data has been rounded to the nearest 5, Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

Deprivation quintile

Students from the most deprived quintile accounted for only 8% of HLAs at HEIs (Figure 2.6, Table B5).

Figure 2.6: NI domiciled HLA students at HEIs by deprivation quintile, 2021/22



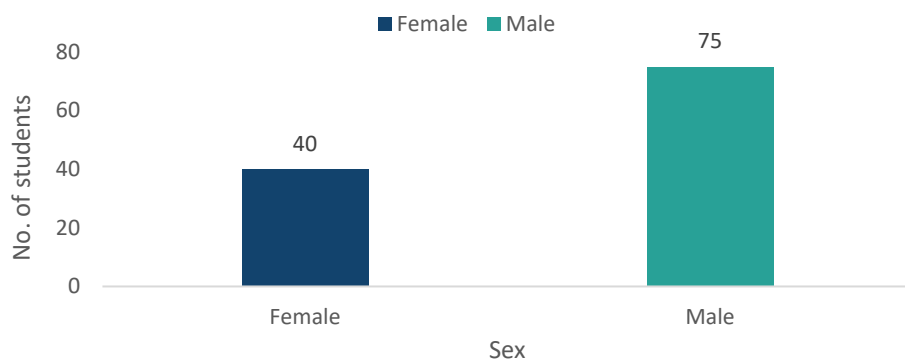
Source: HESA

Notes: Data is rounded to nearest 5. NIMDM (2017) is only available for NI domiciled students.

3. Qualifications

In 2021/22, 115 students successfully qualified with HLAs at NI HEIs, there were 40 females and 75 males. (Figure 3.1, Table C1).

Figure 3.1: HLA qualifiers at HEIs by sex, 2021/22

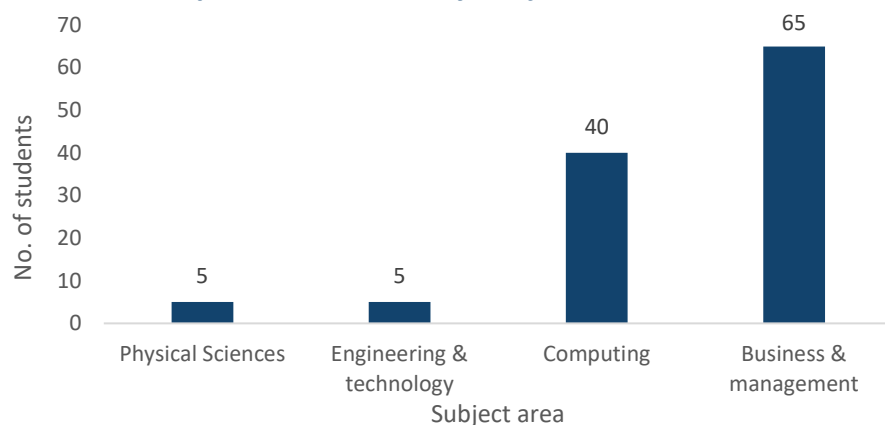


Source: HESA

Notes: Data is rounded to nearest 5.

The subject area to report the highest number of HLA qualifiers was Business and management (65), followed by computing (40) (Figure 3.2, Table C3).

Figure 3.2: HLA qualifiers at HEIs by subject area, 2021/22

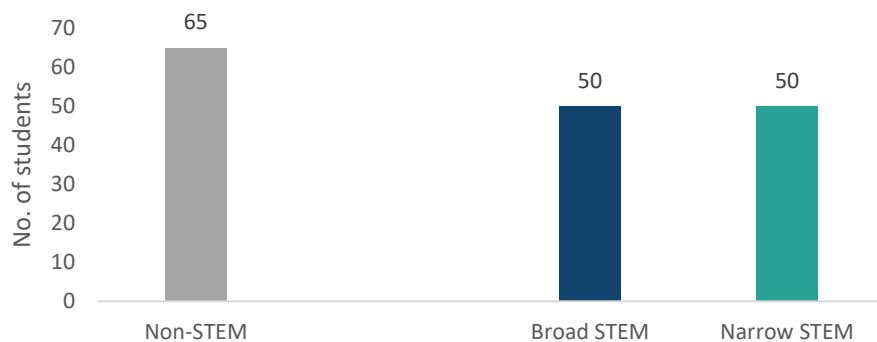


Source: HESA

Notes: Data is rounded to nearest 5

There were a higher number of Non-STEM (57%) HLA qualifiers than Broad STEM (43%) (Figure 3.3, Table C4).

Figure 3.3: HLA qualifiers at HEIs by STEM Indicator, 2021/22



Source: HESA

Notes: Data is rounded to nearest 5. Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

More detailed tables providing further information on HLA students at HEIs in can be accessed at [HLA HEI Tables](#).

An Official Statistics Publication

The statistics within this fact sheet 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: [Code for Practice for Statistics](#).

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: [State of compliance](#).

Notes

New Apprenticeships Incentive Scheme

This scheme was set up as a response to the pandemic to provide financial support to employers who create new apprenticeship places. The scheme was launched in September 2020 for new apprenticeships in the financial year 01.04.20 to 31.03.21 and was later extended to include new apprenticeships in the financial year 01.04.21 to 31.03.22.

Data Collection

The information presented in this statistical fact sheet is based on data supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The HESA data relates to HLA participants at NI HEIs: Ulster University, Queens University Belfast and the Open University. A full set of tables for NI HEIs and all other publicly funded HEIs in the UK are published by HESA and are available to download from the [HESA website](#).

Data Rounding

To prevent the identification of individuals, figures throughout the report are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, and 2 rounded to 0. Due to rounding, the sum of numbers in each row or column may not match the total shown.

Percentages are calculated based on rounded figures and are rounded to the nearest integer.

Higher Level Apprenticeships

Level 6 Apprenticeships are equivalent to a full Bachelor's degree and **Level 7** Apprenticeships are equivalent to a Master's degree. A list of the Higher Level Apprenticeships available can be accessed at [Higher Level Apprenticeships](#).

Section 75

Information on religion, marital status and dependents is only collected for NI domiciled students studying at NI HE Institutions. Information on disability and ethnicity is collected on the basis of a student's self-assessment.

Starts

The sum of starts between 2018/19 to 2020/21 is higher than the figure for all participants in 2020/21, as some participants may not have continued their studies for the full duration or may have qualified.

STEM Indicator

The STEM groupings used in this fact sheet are based on the approach developed by HESA to categorise subjects into science/non-science subjects. Their science grouping is an aggregation of relevant CAH v1.3.4 level 1 subject codes (derived from HECoS), with the exception of CAH26 (Geography, earth and environmental studies), which has been split into natural sciences and social sciences. The natural science element is categorised into the science grouping and the social sciences element into the non-science grouping. The same approach has been taken when categorising CAH level 1 subject codes into STEM groupings, and maps well to the previous JACS coding of STEM subjects.

Broad STEM includes the following subject areas: Medicine and dentistry; Subjects allied to medicine; Biological and sports sciences; Psychology; Veterinary sciences; Agriculture, food and related studies; Physical Sciences; Mathematical sciences; Engineering and technology; Computing; Geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences); and Architecture, building and planning.

Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM and includes the following subject areas: Biological and sports sciences; Psychology; Physical sciences; Mathematical sciences; Engineering and technology; Computing; and Geography, earth and environmental studies (natural sciences).

Subject Coding

2019/20 saw the introduction of a new subject coding system, the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS). This replaced the previous subject coding system, the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) used in years prior to 2019/20. In addition to HECoS, a Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) was introduced to provide a standardised hierarchical aggregation of HECoS codes suitable for the majority of users. The CAH was developed to provide standard groupings that could be applied to both HECoS and JACS allowing for consistent analysis across coding frames. It is important to remember though that these are two distinct coding frames. CAH was subsequently updated from version 1.2 to version 1.3.4 in 2020/21, which has resulted in some minor changes to the categories.

CAH v1.3.4 was introduced to increase the usefulness and intelligibility of detailed subject groupings, but at the highest level of aggregation it provides similar insights to CAH v1.2. For more information, please refer to HESA's webpage on [HECoS and CAH](#).

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2017) and Local Government District (LGD)

NIMDM (2017) and LGD is only applicable to NI domiciled students. The 2018/19 figures in the HLA starts by deprivation quintile table were revised in 2019/20 to exclude non-NI domiciled students.

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Contact details can be found in the statistical bulletin [Higher Level Apprenticeships at FE Colleges and CAFRE, academic year 2017/18 – 2020/22](#).