

Storyboard for Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2002/03 to 2015/16

Enrolments have decreased in recent years.

Between 2002/03 and 2010/11, enrolments in Essential Skills increased year on year. However, since 2011/12, enrolments have started to decrease. Over the past academic year, enrolments have decreased by 2.7% from 39,218 in 2014/15 to 38,147 in 2015/16, but still remain higher than totals in 2008/09 and earlier academic years.

There has been a shift towards Numeracy being the most popular subject in recent years....

While Literacy has been the most popular Essentials Skills subject (40.2%) over the course of the strategy, Numeracy has accounted for the largest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments in each year since 2007/08. The most recent academic year indicates that Numeracy accounts for 37.5%, Literacy for 33.9% and ICT for 28.6% of Essential Skills enrolments.

...more males are enrolled in each of the three subjects...

Over the 14 year period, 53.2% of the students on Essential Skills courses have been male. There were more males enrolled than females across the three subjects: Literacy (55.4%); ICT (53.2%) and Numeracy (50.9%).

... and students are consistently young (16-24).

Since the strategy began, in each academic year those aged '16-24' have formed the highest proportion of Essential Skills, ranging from 46.8% to 83.3% across various years.

Fewer Economically Inactive individuals are enrolling....

The proportion of enrolments where the status of employment was reported as 'economically inactive' has decreased from 42.3% in 2014/15 to 35.5% in 2015/16.

....and more are studying at level 2.

Since the start of the strategy, the proportion of Essential Skills enrolments at 'Level 2' has generally been increasing; from 7.0% in 2002/03 to 42.5% in 2015/16.

A higher proportion of enrolments are from the most deprived areas.

In the most recent academic year, 27.2% of enrolments were from the most deprived areas, while 10.2% of enrolments were from the least deprived areas.

Qualifications have recently decreased.

Between 2014/15 and 2015/16, the number of qualifications gained decreased by 3.8%, from 31,453 to 30,261 respectively.

The majority of students gain a qualification.

Overall, almost two thirds (65.4%) of Essential Skills enrolments gain a qualification. For Numeracy enrolments, the equivalent success rate is 68.2%, while it is 67.5% for Literacy and 56.0% for ICT enrolments.