

Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland from 2002/03 to 2017/18

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This publication presents a range of analysis regarding the numbers and characteristics of those enrolling and qualifying in Essential Skills since the start of the Strategy in 2002/03.

Key Points

- Some 214,000 individuals have participated in Essential Skills to date, accounting for over 530,000 enrolments and almost 345,000 qualifications (Tables 1 and 12).
- Due to a combination of factors, including a dip in the 16-19 year old population (the main age group taking Essential Skills) and improvements in GCSE grades, annual enrolments have decreased for seven consecutive years, from a peak of 59,944 in 2010/11 to 31,388 in 2017/18 (Table 1).
- The annual number of qualifications issued reached a peak of 40,851 in 2013/14, before decreasing, at a faster rate than enrolments, to 18,395 in 2017/18. A refresh of Essential Skills curriculum standards is likely to have been an important factor in this reduction, and in a decrease in the proportion of Level 2 qualifications issued, from 60.4% in 2015/16 to 47.6% in 2017/18, and a corresponding increase in the Entry Level share, from 11.8% to 20.5% (Table 13).
- In 2017/18, over three-fifths (62.3%) of enrolments were from those who were unemployed or economically inactive, compared with an average of 55.8% over the history of the Strategy (Table 4).
- Generally, the more deprived an area is, the higher the number of enrolments from those living in that area. Over the 16 years of the Strategy, over half of enrolments have been from the two most deprived quintiles of Super Output Areas (51.6%) (Table 6).
- From 2002/03 to 2017/18, Numeracy has been the most popular subject choice among those aged 16-19 (39.8%), while Literacy has been most popular among 20-44 year olds (44.1%). For those aged 45+, the most common subject has been ICT (38.6%) (Table 8).

Reader Information

Purpose Monitor and report on Essential Skills enrolment and qualification activity in Northern Ireland.

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Statistical Quality Information detailed in this release has been quality assured with Essential Skills data providers prior to release.

Target audience DfE, Directors of Further Education (FE) Colleges in Northern Ireland, Board members of FE Colleges, educational professionals, academics, media and members of the public interested in the FE sector.

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About Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education)

Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education) is responsible for the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of timely and accurate information derived from a wide range of statistical information returns supplied by the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Further Education (FE) colleges across Northern Ireland (NI) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Statistical information is collected routinely from a variety of electronic individual level administrative systems.

The Head of Branch is the Principal Statistician, Brian French. The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the Committee for the Economy, FE colleges, universities, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within DfE, other educational organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations, as well as the general public.

The statistical information collected is used to contribute to major exercises such as reporting on the performance of the Higher Education (HE) and FE sectors, other comparative performance exercises, target setting and monitoring, departmental research projects, development of service frameworks, as well as policy formulation and evaluation. In addition, the information is used in response to a high volume of ad hoc queries each year.

Information is disseminated through several key statistical publications, including:

- [Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes](#);
- [Further Education Activity](#);
- [Higher Education Enrolments](#);
- [Higher Education Qualifications](#);
- [Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education](#).

A detailed list of these publications is available from:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistics-publication-schedule>

Explanatory Notes

This statistical release is the ninth in an annual series presenting information on Essential Skills Enrolments and Outcomes in Northern Ireland.

Definitions of the terms used within the report, as well as more information on the methodology used to produce the statistics, can be found in Annexes 2 and 3.

Data Collection

The information presented in this bulletin derives from a series of statistical returns listed below:

- Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for the years 2002/03 – 2012/13
- Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for the years 2013/14 – 2017/18
- Essential Skills enrolment extract from the Client Management System (CMS) for the years 2002/03 – 2017/18
- Essential Skills Qualifications Return for the years 2002/03 – 2017/18

The enrolment data returns are merged and a process is in place to deal with any duplicate enrolments. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of enrolments.

This report covers the academic years 2002/03 to 2017/18. Previous statistical reports can be found at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/essential-skills-enrolments>

Supplementary Tables

Detailed Supplementary Tables are available on the DfE web page:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/essential-skills-enrolments-publications-201718>

Rounding

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

Data Quality

All information presented in this bulletin in respect of the CDR has been validated and quality assured by FE Colleges prior to publication. Following submission, this Branch performs a series of validation checks, with any issues being presented to the FE Colleges for clarification or amendment as necessary. Validations are also run for training programme enrolment data,

although the bulletin is published prior to receiving the amended data due to the time taken for the amendments to be administered within the training programme dataset. As such, any amendments are reflected in future publications.

While awarding organisations conduct internal audits and quality assurance checks on the data, data are also checked and validated by this Branch at each quarterly return. Any errors are fed back to the appropriate awarding organisation for amendment.

Main Uses of Data

The main uses of these data are: to monitor Essential Skills activity; to help assess Essential Skills performance; corporate monitoring; to inform and monitor related Essential Skills policy; and to respond to NI Assembly questions and ad hoc queries from the public.

Who will be interested?

The information presented in this statistical bulletin will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example, the statistics are used by DfE policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for DfE to discharge their duties; by the NI Assembly's Committee for the Economy to scrutinise the Essential Skills sector; by other government departments, such as the Department of Education; by local businesses to quantify the supply of those qualifying in their business area; by prospective students to inform their choices around Essential Skills courses; and by researchers and academics to try and understand the underlying trends in Essential Skills.

An Official Statistics Publication

The statistics within this bulletin 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:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/>.

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:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statement-compliance>

Essential Skills data published elsewhere

Essential Skills qualification statistics are also published by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). These quarterly bulletins can be found at: http://ccea.org.uk/regulation/statistics/technical_professional. The numbers of Essential Skills qualifications reported by CCEA may not be

comparable with the figures in this publication, due to differences in the way qualifications are reported to and classified by Ofqual. Further details on this can be found within the latest CCEA publication at the above link.

Comparing levels of qualifications

Within Essential Skills for 'Literacy' and 'Numeracy', individuals can obtain qualifications at 5 different levels: Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2.

Essential Skills Information Communication and Technology (ICT) courses are only available at Level 1 and Level 2. Further information on the various levels is available within Annex 2 of this document. Qualifications at the same level are of a similar level of demand or difficulty.

For further information on comparing qualifications across the UK, Ireland and overseas please refer to the link:

<http://ofqual.gov.uk/help-and-advice/comparing-qualifications>

Introduction

The then Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) launched the [Essential Skills for Living Strategy](#) and action plan in April 2002. The Strategy aims to improve adult literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Northern Ireland. Essential Skills courses, which are funded by DfE, are free to participants and delivered by accredited tutors working in Further Education (FE) Colleges, private training providers and community organisations.

This statistical bulletin has been produced by DfE's Statistics and Research Branch (Tertiary Education). It details the number of enrolments, the number of qualifications gained, the characteristics of those participating, and the performance rates for Essential Skills over the 16 years of the Strategy.

Structure

The bulletin is divided into three sections:

- Section A details Essential Skills enrolments;
- Section B focuses on Essential Skills qualifications;
- Section C details the performance rates (retention, achievement and success) for Essential Skills provision.

Policy and Operational Context

The Minister for the Economy has responsibility within the NI Executive for FE colleges. The minister is also accountable to the Committee for the Economy, which undertakes a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to DfE and plays a key role in the consideration and development of legislation.

It is within this context that the [Essential Skills for Living Strategy](#) has been designed to improve levels of Numeracy, Literacy and ICT among the adult population in Northern Ireland. The vision for the delivery of the Essential Skills Strategy is:

“to provide opportunities for adults to update their Essential Skills to assist them in improving their overall quality of life, their personal development and their employment opportunities and by so doing to promote greater economic development, social inclusion and cohesion”.

The curriculum standards for the Essential Skills of Application of Number and Communication were refreshed and published by the Department for the Economy (DfE) in 2016, for first teaching from September 2016. The purpose

of the refresh was to update the standards and to make them more suitable for a wider cohort of learners.

The assessment methodology was also reviewed and developed to include an external end point assessment model for Application of Number and Communication at levels 1 and 2. The purpose of this change was to increase the rigour of the assessment methodology in the light of Northern Ireland's position in international studies of literacy and numeracy.

It was anticipated that the outcomes of this change could potentially result in lower achievement rates over the first two years. These results reflect the position at the end of the second year of delivery.

Section A: Enrolments

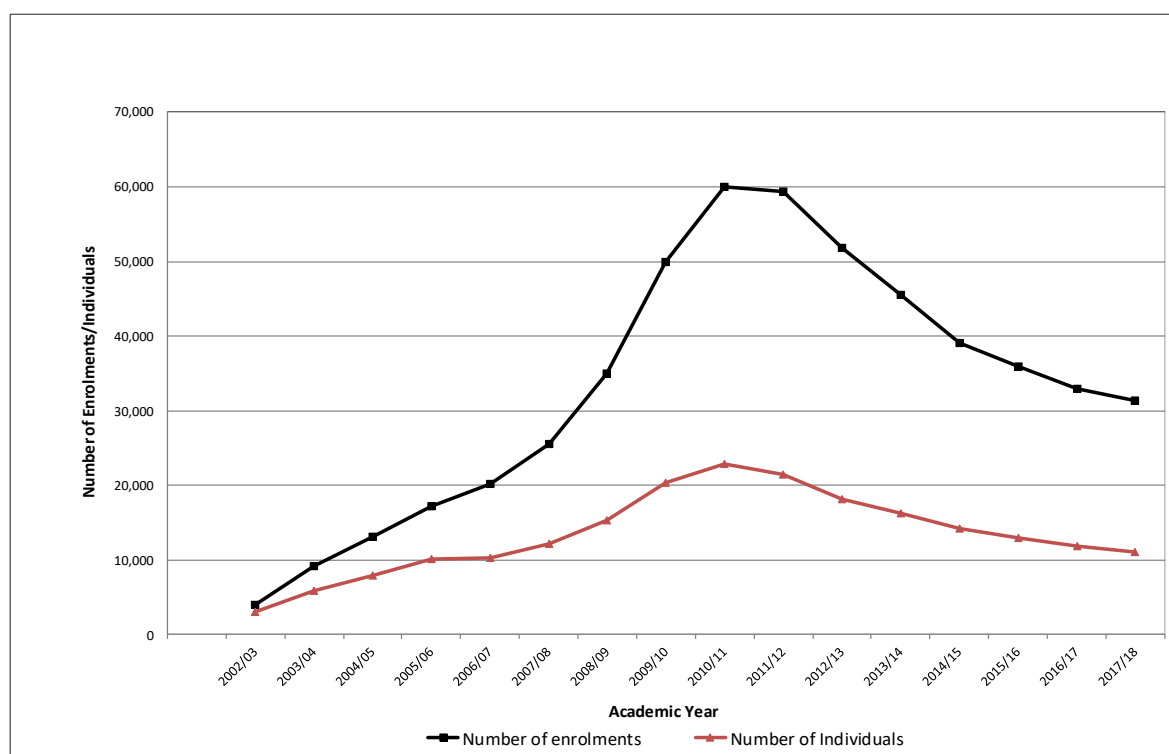
Enrolments and participants

Some 214,000 individuals have participated in Essential Skills to date, accounting for over 530,000 enrolments. Between 2002/03 and 2010/11, the annual number of enrolments increased year on year, reaching a peak of 59,944. Since then, the annual number of enrolments has decreased in each of the next seven academic years to a total of 31,388 in 2017/18. The number of individuals enrolling has followed a similar pattern, peaking at 22,848 in 2010/11 and decreasing in each subsequent year to 11,131 in 2017/18.

Over the last academic year, enrolments decreased from a total of 32,999 in 2016/17 to 31,388 in 2017/18 (Figure 1 and Table 1).

A combination of factors may have influenced the decline in the number of Essential Skills enrolments in recent years. The [Mid-Year Population](#) data show a dip in the number of 16-19 year olds (the main age group undertaking Essential Skills) in Northern Ireland in recent years. This effect is being compounded by [incremental increases in the proportion of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths](#), from 62.0% in 2011/12 to 69.6% in 2016/17.

[The refresh of Essential Skills curriculum standards for literacy and numeracy](#), referred to in the introduction, is likely to have been an important factor in the two most recent academic years. In addition, the potential supply of participants among the adult population may have been decreasing over time as many have already achieved Essential Skills qualifications or equivalent. Relatively low unemployment levels may also have been a factor.



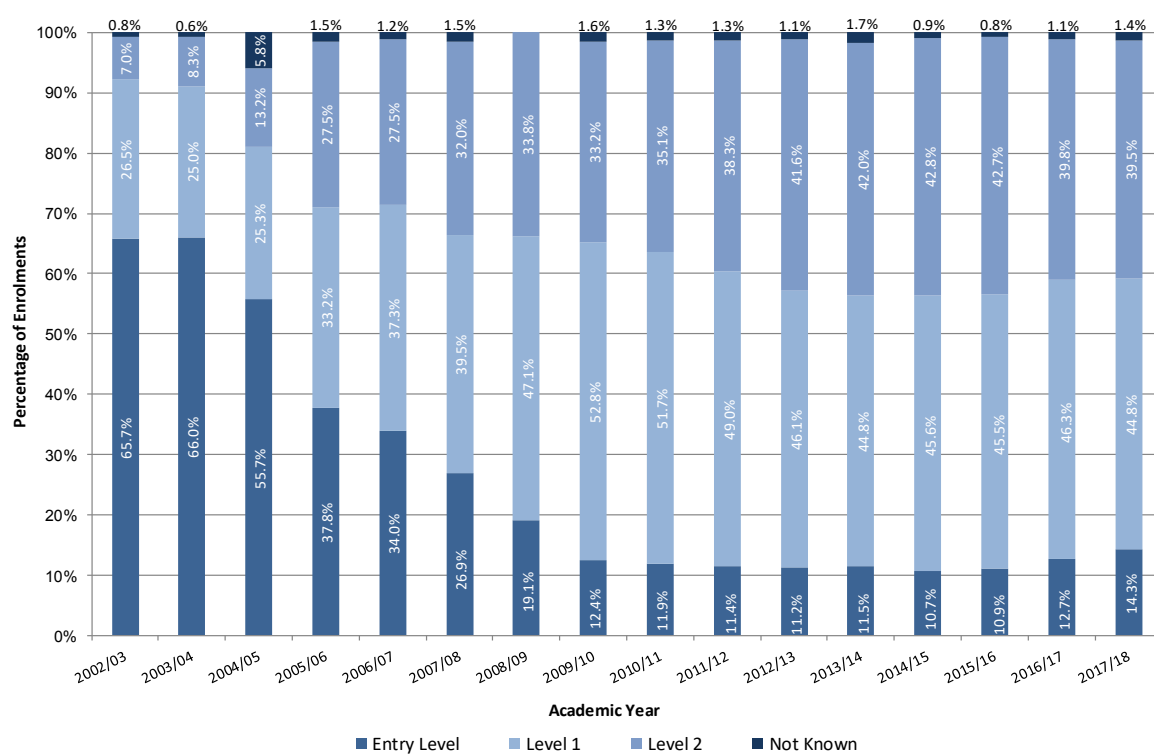
Target level of study

Over the course of the Essential Skills Strategy, the highest proportion of enrolments has been at Level 1 (45.4%); including 44.8% in 2017/18.

The proportion of enrolments at Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grade A*-C) increased steadily from 7.0% in 2002/03 to a peak of 42.8% in 2014/15. However, by 2017/18, this proportion had fallen to 39.5%, possibly in part due to the recent refresh of the curriculum standards.

Conversely, while the proportion of Entry Level enrolments decreased from 66.0% in 2003/04 to a low of 10.7% in 2014/15, the most recent academic year has seen an increase to 14.3% (Figure 2 and Table 2).

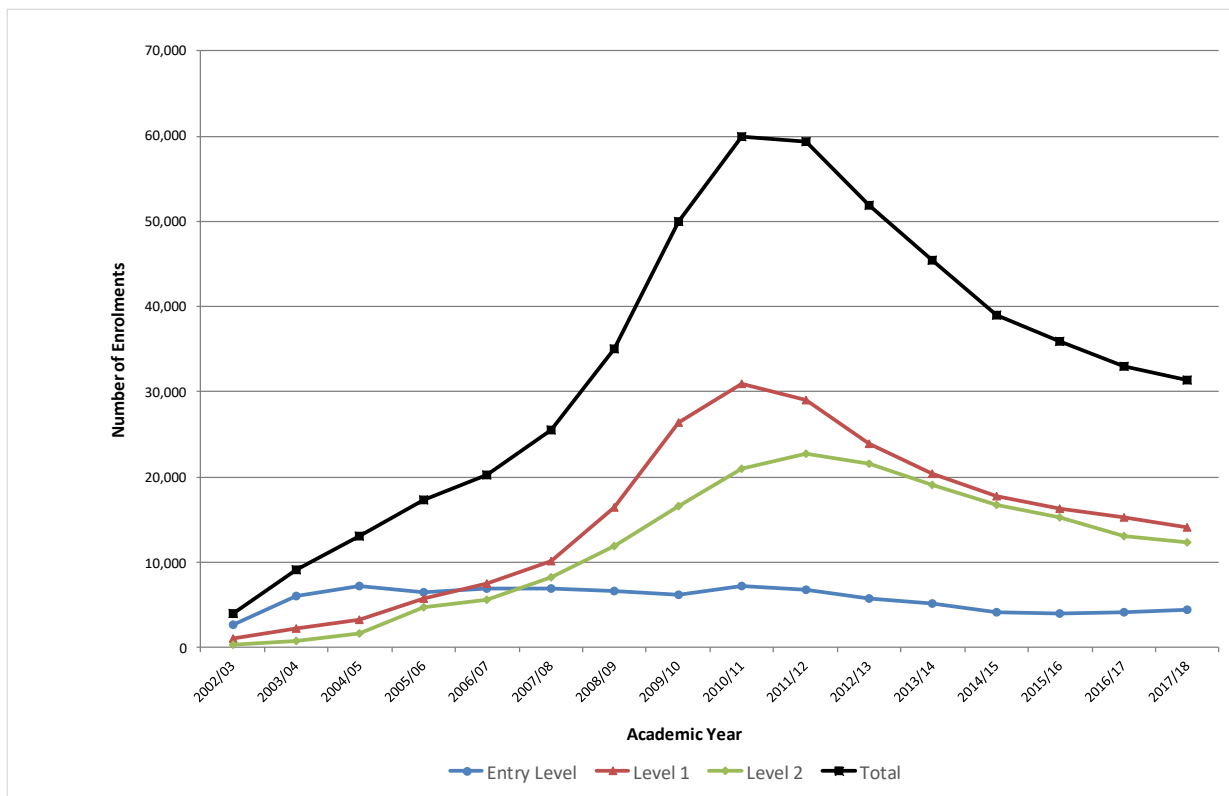
Figure 2: Percentage of Essential Skills enrolments by target level of study and academic year



Enrolments at Level 1 have decreased in number from a peak of 30,986 in 2010/11 to 14,073 in 2017/18. Similarly, Level 2 enrolments have decreased from a peak of 22,746 in 2011/12, to 12,395 in the most recent academic year.

While entry level enrolments decreased from 7,159 in 2010/11 to 3,926 in 2015/16, there has been an increase in each of the past two years, possibly in part due to the recent refresh of the curriculum standards. In 2017/18, there were 4,487 Entry Level enrolments, the highest total since 2013/14 (Figure 3 and Table 2).

Figure 3: Number of Essential Skills enrolments by target level of study and academic year



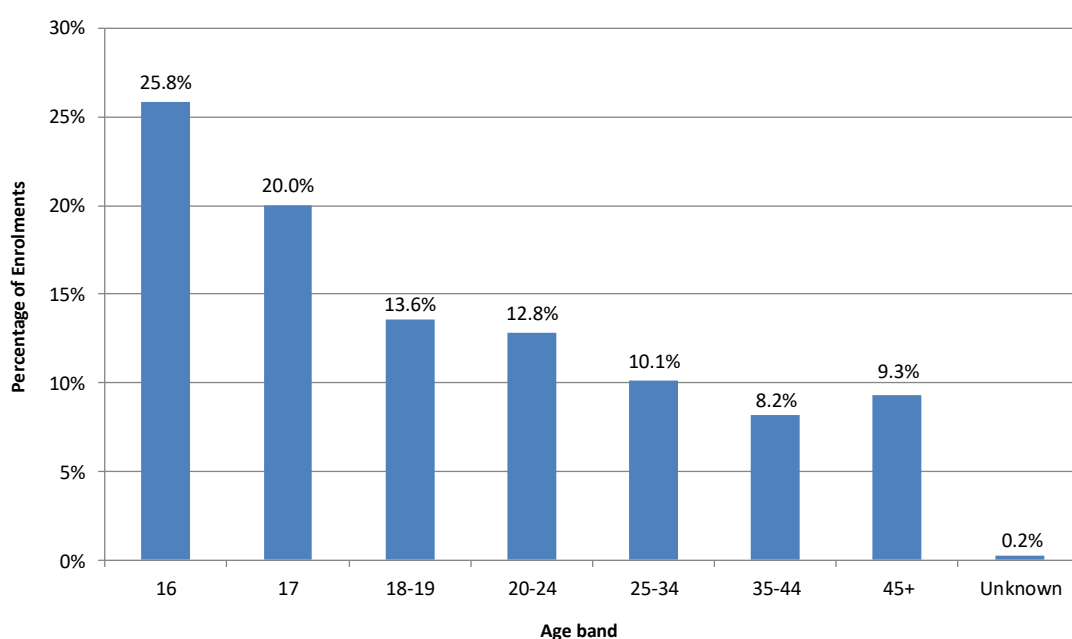
What are the characteristics of those participating?

Age

Since the start of the Essential Skills Strategy, almost three-fifths (59.4%) of enrolments have been from those aged 16-19.

While 16-year-olds have accounted for 25.8% of enrolments over the full history of the Strategy, they made up 29.6% of enrolments in 2017/18. Those aged 45 and over have accounted for 9.3% of enrolments throughout the 16 years of the Strategy, although their share of enrolments fell to 5.6% in the most recent academic year (Figure 4 and Table 3).

Figure 4: Essential Skills enrolments by age band since 2002/03

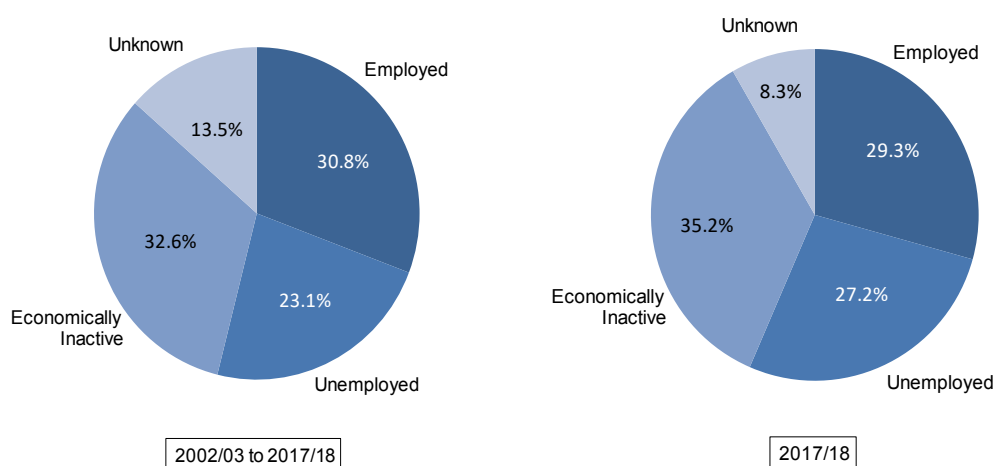


Employment Status

Over half (55.8%) of enrolments in the past 16 years have been from individuals who reported as either 'unemployed' (23.1%) or 'economically inactive' (32.6%). Reflecting a decline in enrolments from those in employment, these two groups accounted for over three-fifths (62.3%) of enrolments in 2017/18.

In 2017/18, 9,203 (29.3%) enrolments had an employment status of 'employed', 8,530 (27.2%) 'unemployed' and 11,039 (35.2%) 'economically inactive'. For 2,616 (8.3%) enrolments, the employment status was unknown (Figure 5 and Table 4).

Figure 5: Essential Skills enrolments by employment status

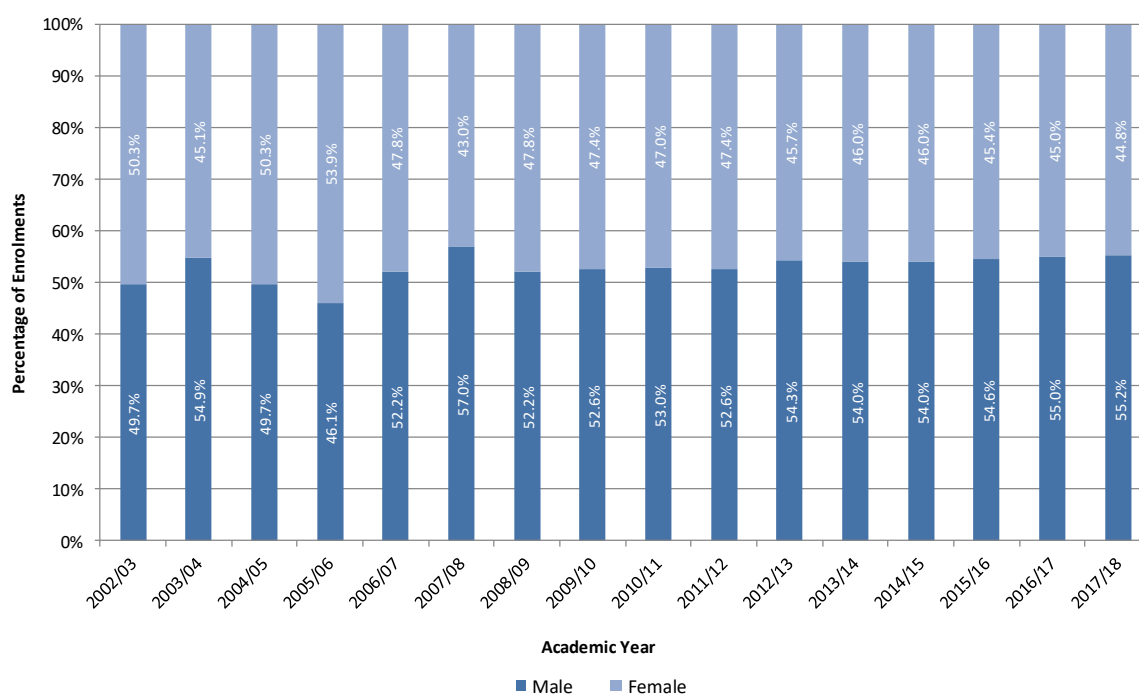


Gender

Over the 16-year history of the Strategy, 53.4% of enrolments on Essential Skills courses have been from male students. The general trend in the earlier part of the Strategy was that the majority of enrolments were from females. In each year since 2006/07, however, enrolments of males have formed the majority.

In the most recent academic year, males accounted for 55.2% (17,338) of enrolments (Figure 6 and Table 5).

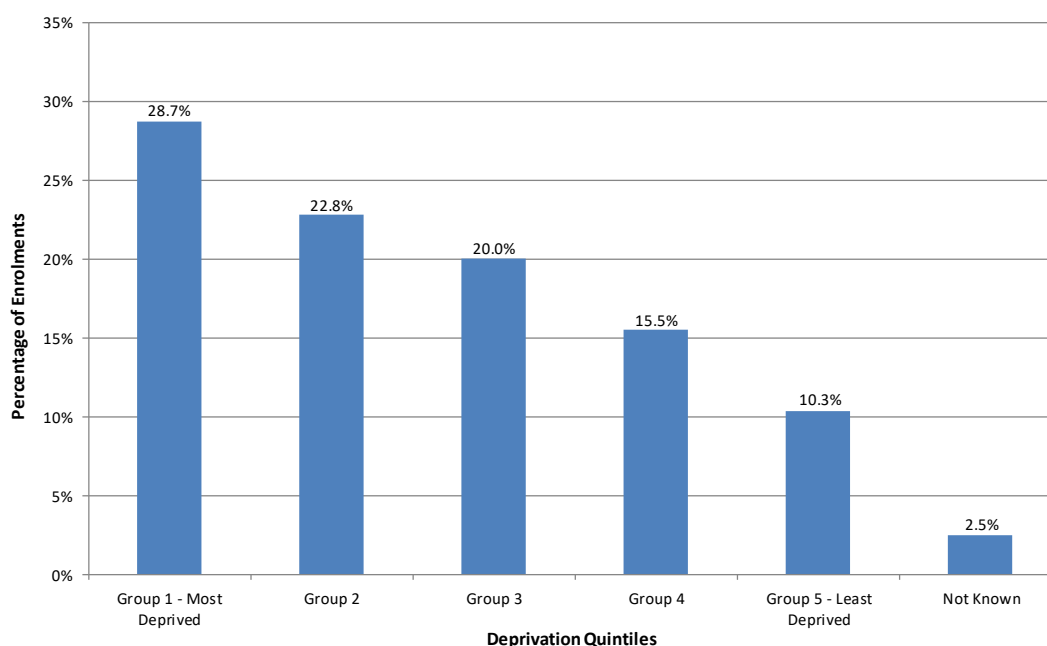
Figure 6: Essential Skills enrolments by gender and academic year



Deprivation Analysis

Deprivation is measured by the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM), which categorises 890 geographical areas across Northern Ireland into five groups, termed 'quintiles'. Each quintile accounts for 20% of the 890 Super Output Areas (SOAs). Quintile 1 is the most deprived group of areas and Quintile 5 is the least deprived group of areas.

Figure 7: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintiles since 2002/03



Generally, the more deprived an area is, the higher the number of Essential Skills enrolments from those living in that area. Over the 16 years of the Strategy, over half of enrolments (51.6%) have been from the two most deprived 'quintiles', with the largest share (28.7%) being from Quintile 1 (Figure 7).

In the most recent academic year, 8,248 (26.3%) enrolments were from the most deprived quintile, 7,183 (22.9%) from the second most deprived quintile, 6,354 (20.2%) from the middle quintile, 5,508 (17.5%) from the second least deprived quintile and 3,390 (10.8%) from the least deprived quintile (Table 6).

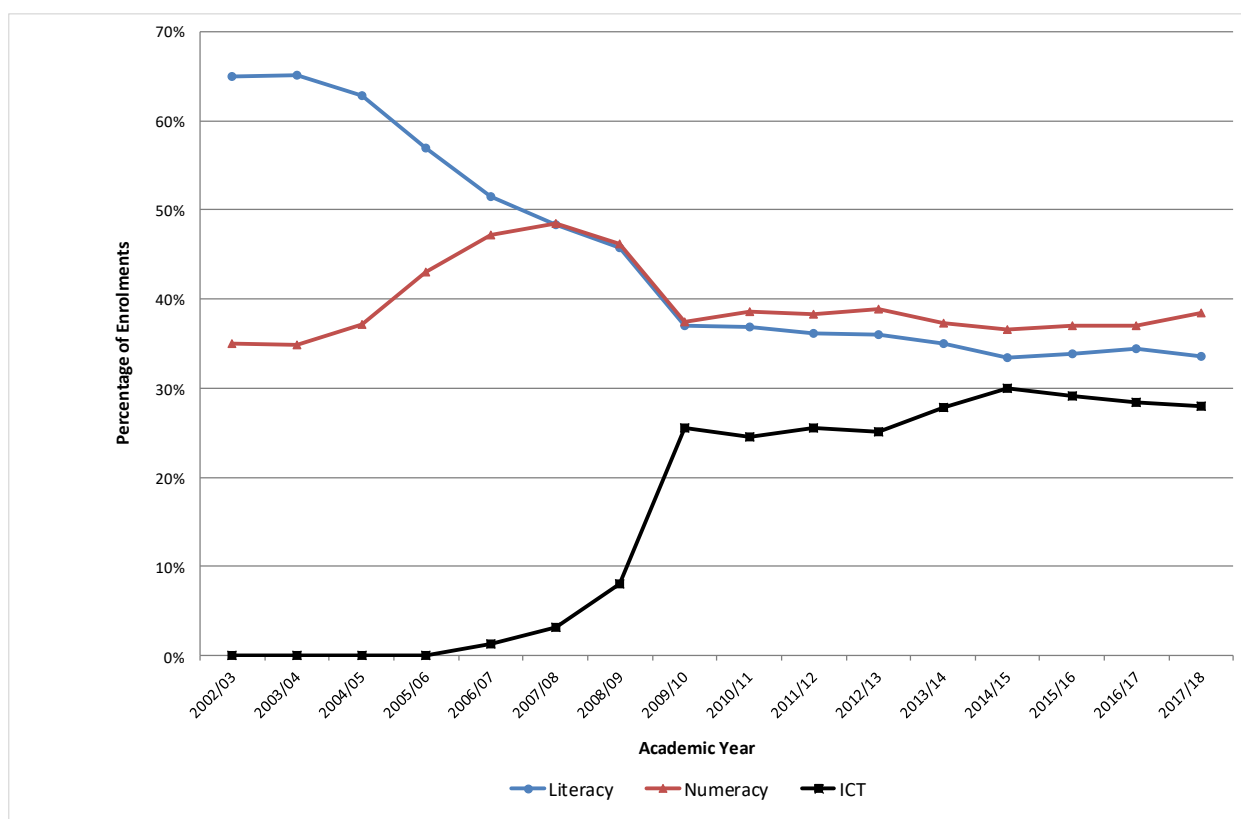
What subjects are being studied?

In the most recent academic year, as a proportion of Essential Skills enrolments, Numeracy accounted for 38.4%, Literacy for 33.6% and ICT for 28.0%.

Initially, Literacy was the most common Essentials Skills course. However, from 2007/08 onwards, Numeracy has accounted for the largest proportion of enrolments each year.

ICT was rolled out as a full programme in August 2009 and has accounted for over a quarter of enrolments in each year since 2011/12 (Figure 8 and Table 7).

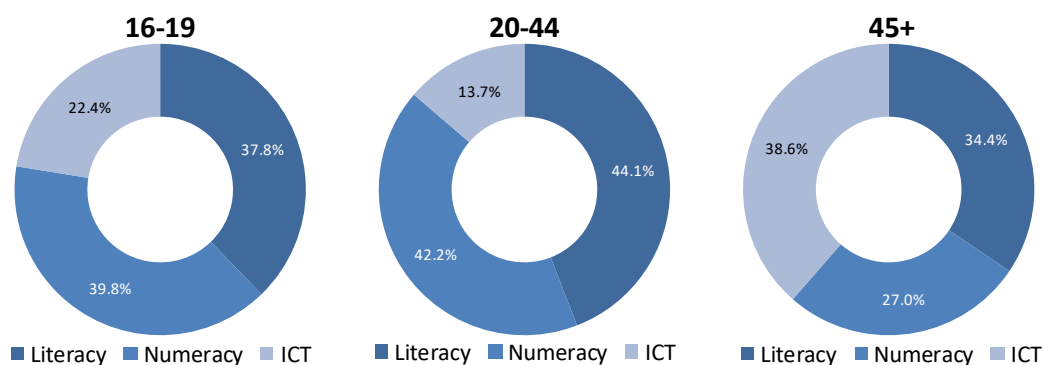
Figure 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year



Subject and Age

From 2002/03 to 2017/18, Numeracy has been the most popular subject choice among those aged 16-19 (39.8%), while Literacy has been most popular among 20-44 year olds (44.1%). For those aged '45+', the most common subject studied has been ICT (38.6%), despite it having only been rolled out as a full programme since August 2009 (Figure 9 and Table 8).

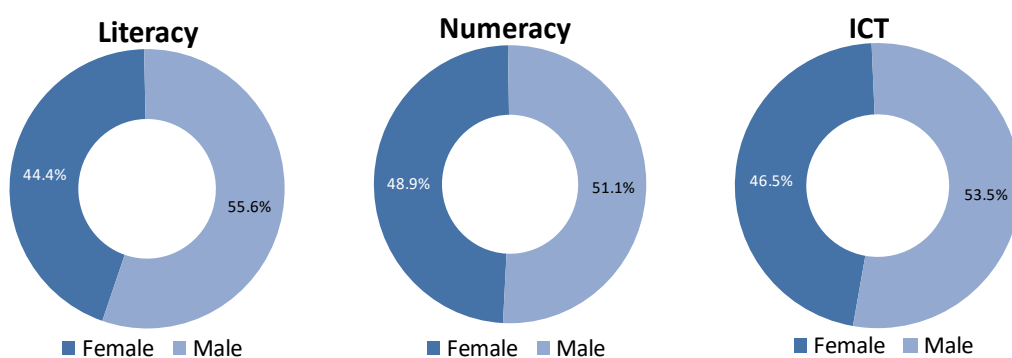
Figure 9: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age since 2002/03



Subject and Gender

Higher proportions of males are enrolled in Essential Skills across all three subjects, ranging from 51.1% in Numeracy to 55.6% in Literacy (Figure 10 and Table 9).

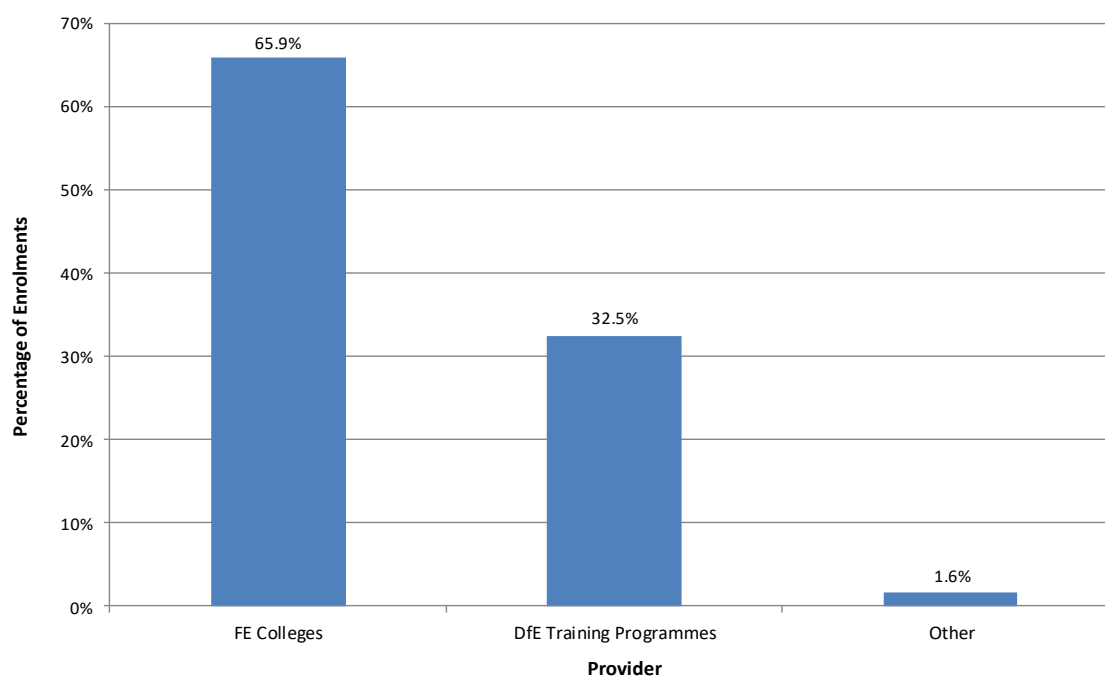
Figure 10: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and gender since 2002/03



Where are the courses being studied?

The main delivery of Essential Skills courses occurs within FE colleges, accounting for 65.9% of all enrolments since 2002, and 61.8% of enrolments in the most recent academic year. Enrolments through DfE training programme providers have accounted for 32.5% over the 16-year period, while 1.6% have been with other providers (Figure 11 and Table 10).

Figure 11: Essential Skills enrolments by provider since 2002/03



The category 'Other' includes enrolments registered against Proteus, Workers' Educational Association, Educational Guidance Service for Adults and the Ulster People's College. No such enrolments have been undertaken since 2007/08.

In 2017/18, the college with the highest proportion of Essential Skills enrolments was Southern Regional College (12.2%, 3,842). The college with the lowest proportion of enrolments was North West Regional College (7.2%, 2,253). DfE training programmes accounted for 38.2% (11,996) of enrolments in 2017/18 (Table 10 and Table 11).

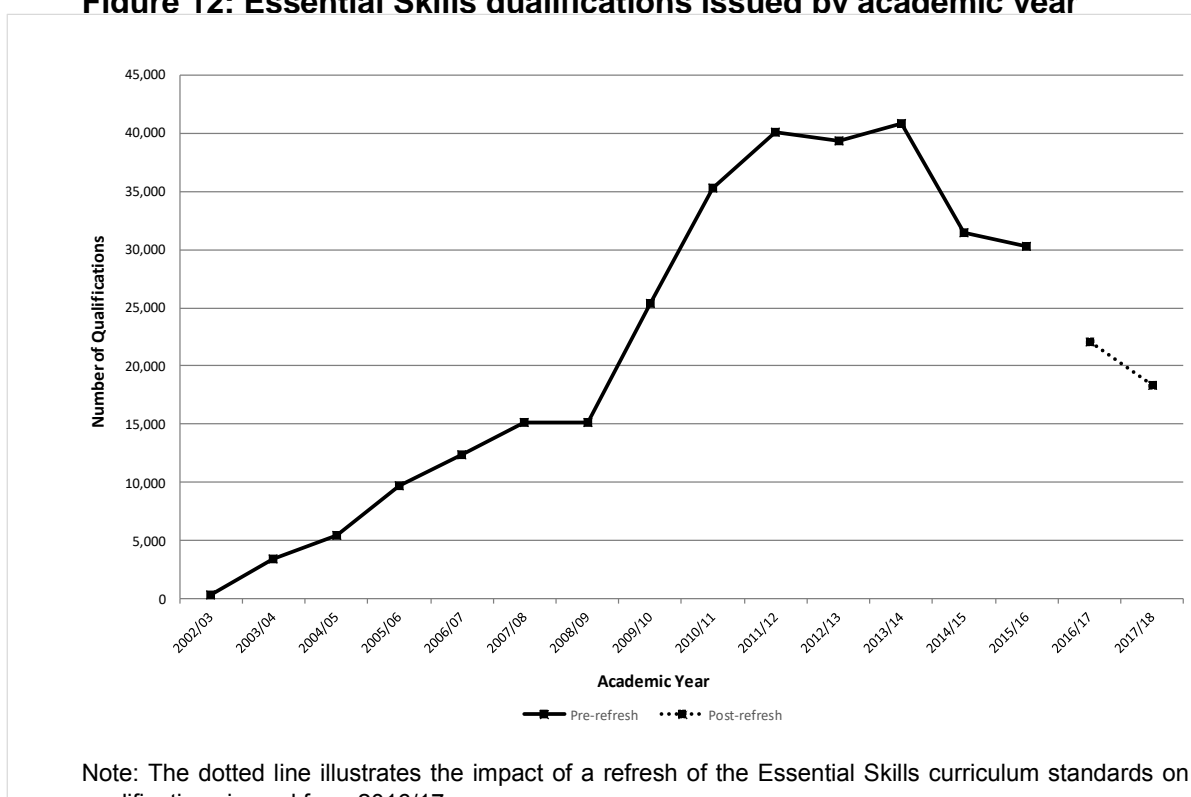
Section B: Qualifications issued

Number of qualifications issued

Almost 345,000 qualifications have been issued in Essential Skills since the Strategy began sixteen years ago.

Qualifications issued have decreased for the fourth year in a row. The annual number of qualifications issued reached a peak of 40,851 in 2013/14, before decreasing, at a faster rate than enrolments, to 22,031 in 2016/17 and 18,395 in 2017/18. A refresh of the Essential Skills curriculum standards is likely to have been an important factor in the marked fall between 2015/16 (30,259) and 2017/18 (18,395) (Figure 12 and Table 12).

Figure 12: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year



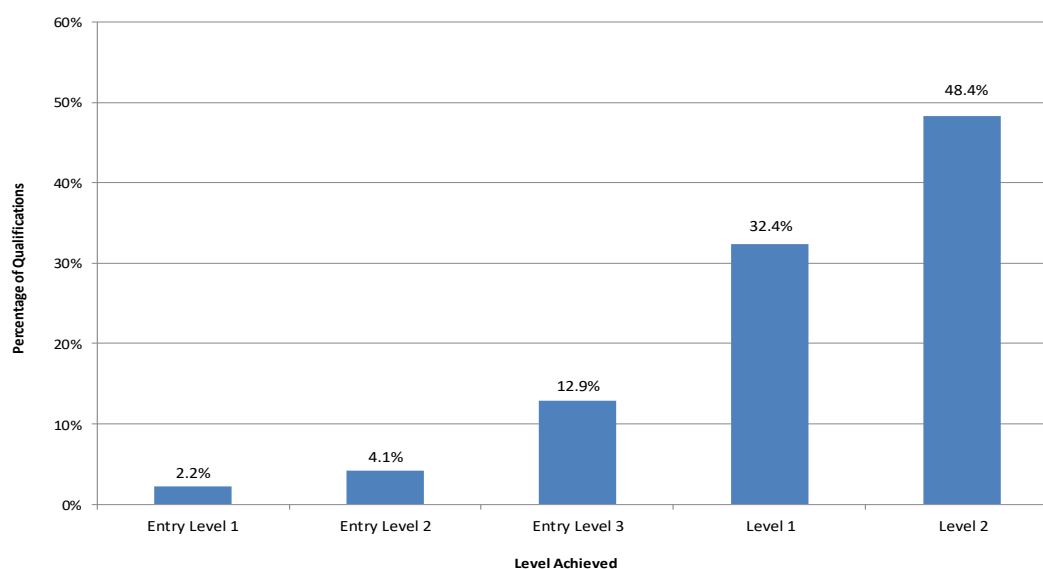
Note: The dotted line illustrates the impact of a refresh of the Essential Skills curriculum standards on qualifications issued from 2016/17.

Qualifications issued by level

Over the 16-year period of the Strategy, although Level 1 has seen the highest number of enrolments (240,745), the highest number of qualifications issued (166,783) have been at Level 2, accounting for 48.4% of all qualifications. This indicates that many students have qualified at a higher level than the target level they enrolled at.

In part due to the recent refresh of the Essential Skills curriculum standards, the proportion of Level 2 qualifications issued decreased from 60.4% in 2015/16 to 47.6% in 2017/18. Conversely, over the same period, the proportion of Entry Level qualifications issued has increased from 11.8% to 20.5%. This is perhaps indicative that students may be less likely than before to be qualifying at a higher level than their initial target level (Figure 13 and Table 13).

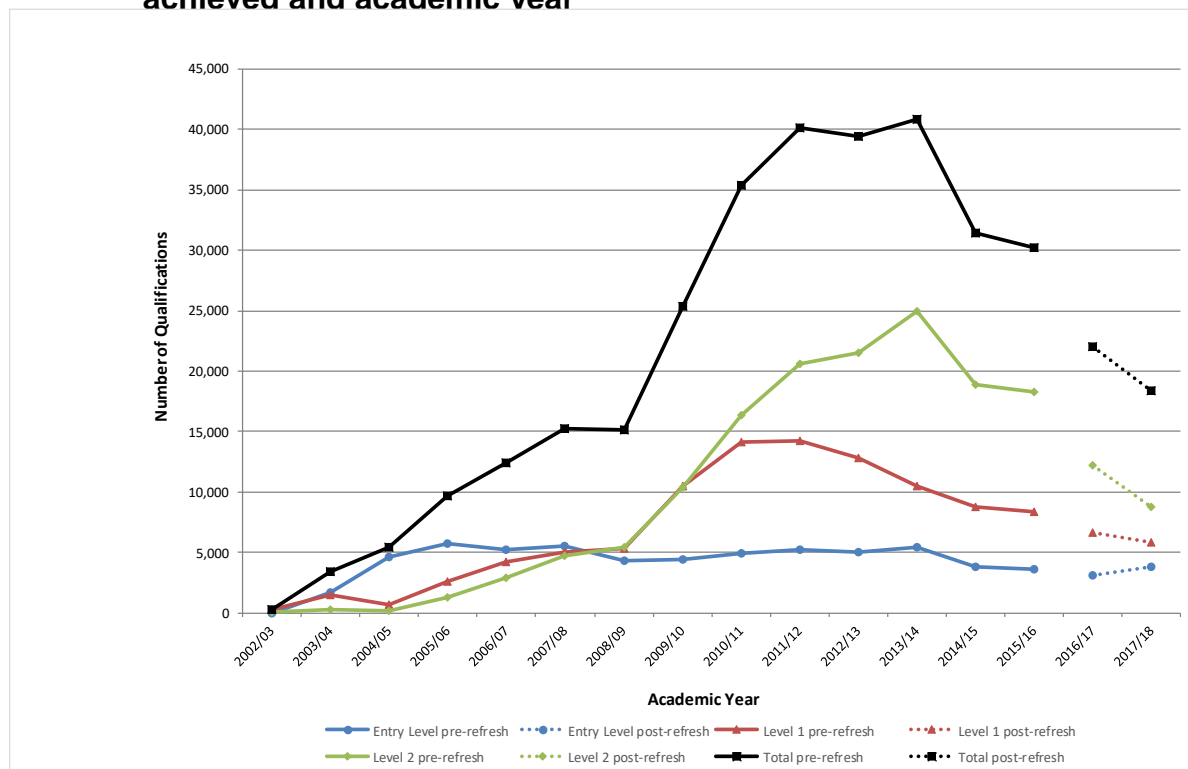
Figure 13: Percentage of Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved since 2002/03



At their peak, in 2013/14, 24,923 qualifications were issued at Level 2. Since then however, this total has fallen sharply, to reach 8,763 in 2017/18. Over the same period, Level 1 qualifications issued have decreased from 10,530 to 5,864.

The number of Entry Level qualifications issued decreased from 5,398 in 2013/14 to 3,137 in 2016/17. However, over the past academic year, they increased to 3,768 (Figure 14 and Table 13).

Figure 14: Number of Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year

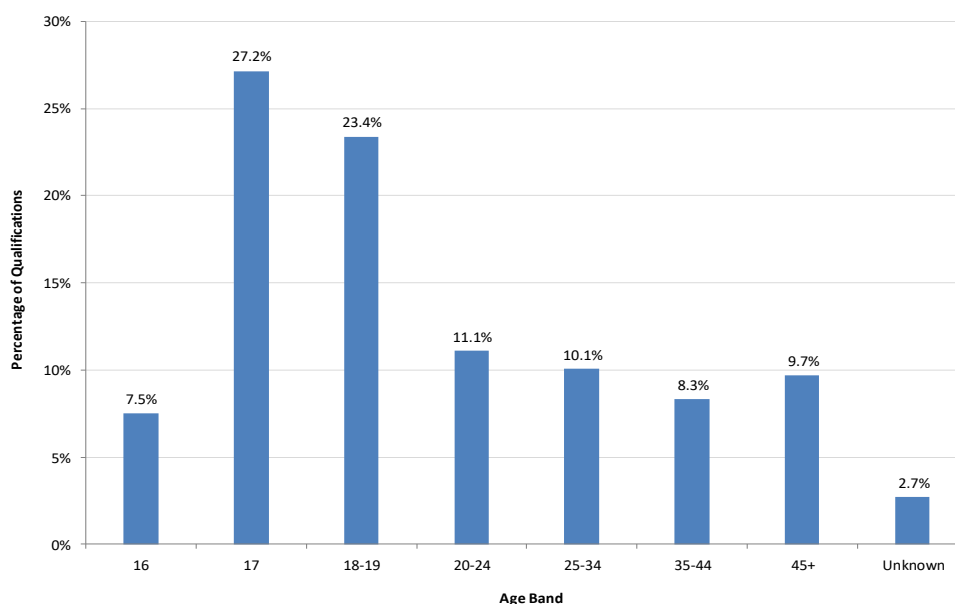


Note: The dotted lines illustrate the impact of a refresh of the Essential Skills curriculum standards on qualifications issued from 2016/17.

Qualifications issued by age band

Since the start of the Strategy, similar to the pattern of enrolments, the majority (58.1%) of qualifications have been issued to those between the ages of 16 and 19. Seventeen-year-olds alone have accounted for over a quarter (27.2%) of all Essential Skills qualifications issued (Figure 15 and Table 14).

Figure 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band since 2002/03



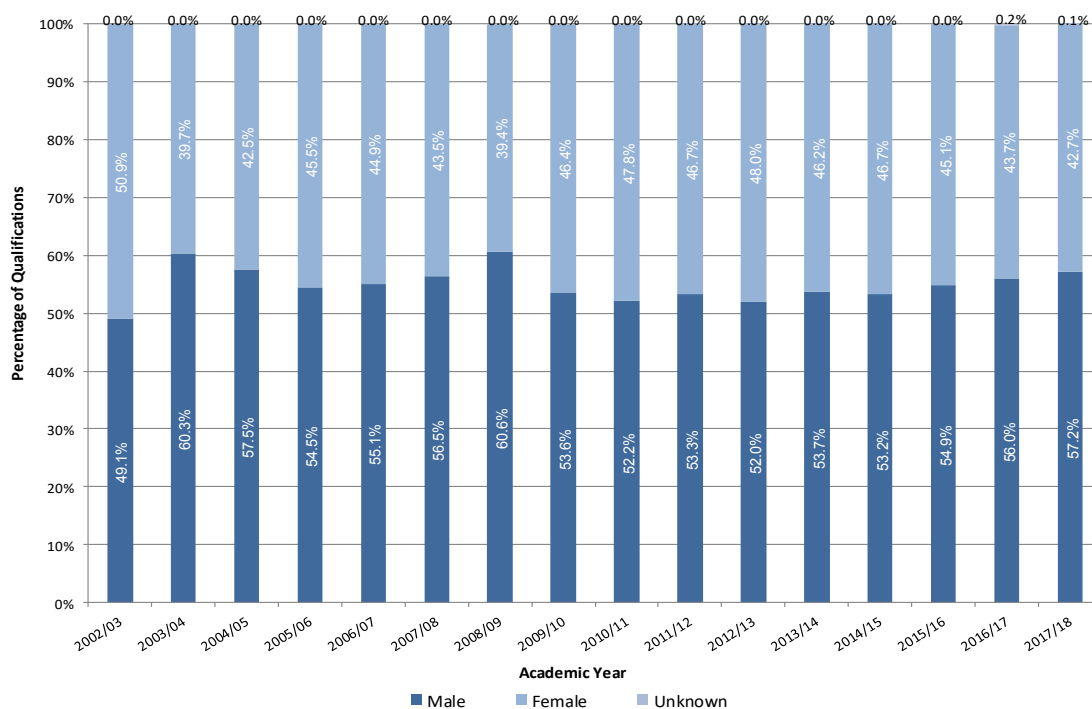
In the most recent academic year, 62.8% of enrolments were from those aged 16-19. Students aged '45+' accounted for 7.8% of enrolments in 2017/18, while over the 16-year history of the Strategy they have accounted for 9.7%.

Qualifications issued by gender

In each academic year, with the exception of 2002/03, males have accounted for the majority of those gaining an Essential Skills qualification, ranging from 52.0% in 2012/13 to 60.6% in 2008/09.

In 2017/18, males gained 10,525 Essential Skills qualifications (57.2%), representing a 1.2 percentage point increase over 2016/17. While females have accounted for 45.7% of qualifications over the past 16 years, the female share has declined from 46.7% in 2014/15 to 42.7% in 2017/18. For 0.1% of the qualifications in 2017/18 the gender is unknown (Figure 16 and Table 15).

Figure 16: Essential Skills qualifications issued by gender and academic year

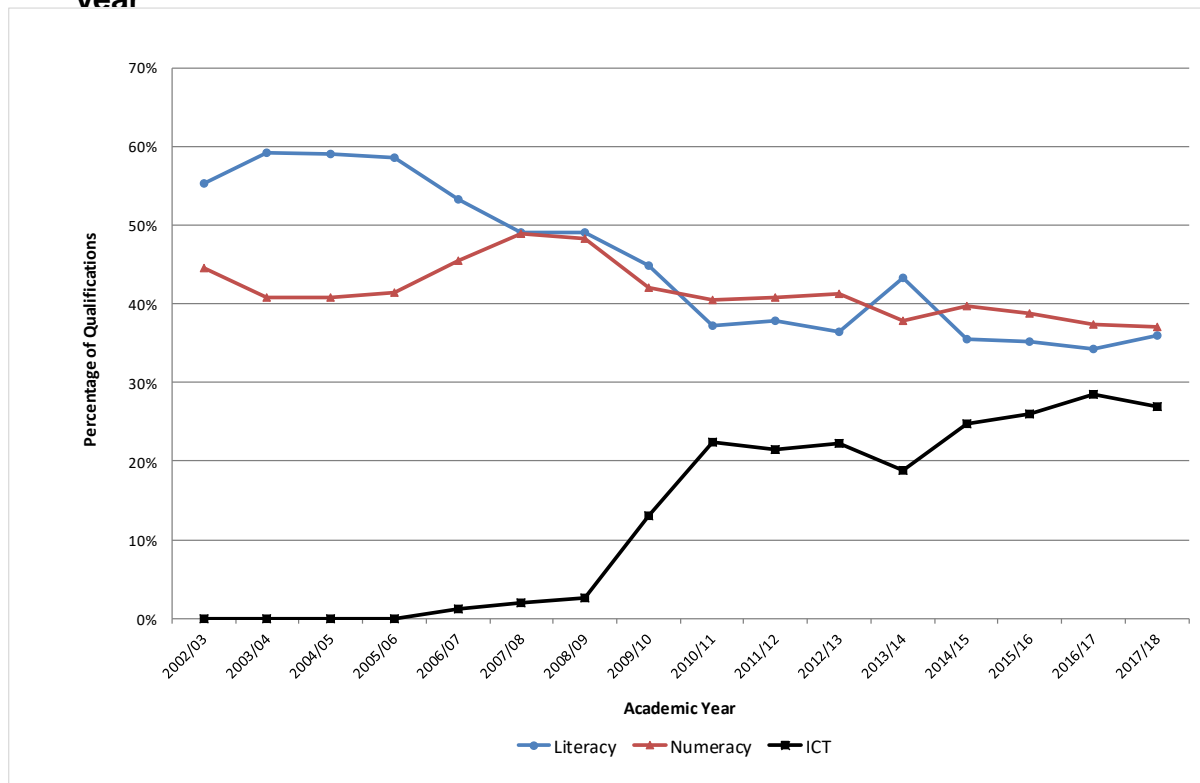


Qualifications issued by subject

Until 2009/10, Literacy accounted for the largest proportion of Essential Skills qualifications. However, with the exception of 2013/14, Numeracy has had the highest proportion of qualifications in each year since 2010/11.

In 2017/18, 37.1% of qualifications were in Numeracy; this was followed by Literacy with 35.9% and ICT with 27.0% (Figure 17 and Table 16).

Figure 17: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year



Section C: Performance

Performance can be measured across three indicators:

- **Retention rate** is defined as the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study, to the number of enrolments.
- **Achievement rate** is defined as the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification, to the number of enrolments who complete their study.
- **Success rate** is the overall measure of performance, which is the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification, to the number of enrolments.

Further details on how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2. No individual academic year figures are presented within performance analysis, as explained in technical note 9.

Essential Skills performance

Over the course of the Strategy, the retention rate within Essential Skills courses has been 89.4%, the achievement rate has been 73.4%, while the success rate has been 65.6%. Therefore, almost two-thirds of Essential Skills enrolments result in a qualification (Table A).

Performance by subject

The retention rate has ranged from 87.6% in ICT to 90.1% in Numeracy. There has been a larger range in the achievement rate, with a rate of 65.4% in ICT and a rate of 75.5% in both Literacy and Numeracy. The success rates for Literacy (67.6%) and Numeracy (68.0%) have also been similar, while ICT has had a lower success rate of 57.3% (Table A and Table 17).

Table A: Essential Skills performance indicators by subject since 2002/03

Subject	Performance Indicator		
	Retention rate	Achievement rate	Success rate
Literacy	89.6%	75.5%	67.6%
Numeracy	90.1%	75.5%	68.0%
ICT	87.6%	65.4%	57.3%
Total	89.4%	73.4%	65.6%

Performance by gender

While achievement rates are very similar across genders, males have a higher retention rate (91.0%) and success rate (66.7%) than females (87.5% and 64.2%). This indicates that males are more likely to stay on their course and gain the qualification (Table B and Table 18).

Table B: Essential Skills performance indicators by gender since 2002/03

Gender	Performance Indicator		
	Retention rate	Achievement rate	Success rate
Male	91.0%	73.3%	66.7%
Female	87.5%	73.4%	64.2%
Total	89.4%	73.4%	65.6%

Performance by age band

The retention rate generally decreases inversely with age band of participant, with those aged 16 having the highest retention rate (92.6%) and those aged 45+ having the lowest (84.3%) (Table C and Table 19).

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by age band due to differences in the way age is calculated for enrolments and qualifications (see Annex 2).

Table C: Essential Skills retention rate by age band since 2002/03

Age Band	Retention rate
16	92.6%
17	90.8%
18-19	87.4%
20-24	90.5%
25-34	86.8%
35-44	86.5%
45+	84.3%
Total	89.4%

Performance by target level of study

Across the five levels of study, the retention rate has ranged from 87.3% at Entry Level 1 to 90.7% at Level 1 over the 16 years of the Strategy (Table D and Table 20).

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by level as students may qualify at a different level to the target level at which they enrolled.

Table D: Essential Skills retention rate by target level of study since 2002/03

Target Level	Retention rate
Entry Level 1	87.3%
Entry Level 2	89.2%
Entry Level 3	89.2%
Level 1	90.7%
Level 2	89.6%
Total	89.4%

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Tables

Table 1: Essential Skills enrolments and individuals by academic year

Academic Year	Number of enrolments	Number of individuals
Up to 31 July 2003	4,010	3,024
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	9,108	5,886
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	13,067	7,922
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	17,262	10,163
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	20,270	10,296
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	25,576	12,093
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	35,000	15,312
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	49,967	20,398
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	59,944	22,848
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	59,377	21,452
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	51,864	18,172
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	45,482	16,238
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	39,001	14,242
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	35,864	12,992
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	32,999	11,847
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	31,388	11,131
Total	530,179	214,016

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Individual students are determined using name and date of birth, and allocated to a particular academic year based on the start date of their first registration. Individuals can enrol in more than one course.

Table 2: Essential Skills enrolments by target level of study and academic year

Academic Year	Target Level						Total
	Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3	Level 1	Level 2	Not Known	
Up to 31 July 2003	885	719	1,031	1,062	282	31	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	1,262	1,808	2,943	2,280	759	56	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	1,196	1,792	4,291	3,300	1,724	764	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	829	1,597	4,102	5,725	4,755	254	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	690	1,610	4,587	7,570	5,567	246	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	577	1,732	4,583	10,102	8,195	387	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	499	1,490	4,701	16,471	11,839	-	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	506	1,424	4,263	26,406	16,566	802	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	825	1,447	4,887	30,986	21,032	767	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	597	1,568	4,629	29,088	22,746	749	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	566	1,162	4,064	23,910	21,573	589	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	468	1,174	3,578	20,376	19,108	778	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	407	811	2,972	17,778	16,694	339	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	261	786	2,879	16,331	15,330	277	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	207	980	3,016	15,287	13,150	359	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	426	1,021	3,040	14,073	12,395	433	31,388
Total	10,201	21,121	59,566	240,745	191,715	6,831	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 3: Essential Skills enrolments by age band and academic year

Academic Year	Age band								Total
	16	17	18-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45+	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	209	200	280	585	982	826	867	61	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	1,657	1,150	605	1,121	1,717	1,431	1,291	136	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	2,105	1,761	927	1,326	2,345	2,397	2,059	147	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	4,196	3,316	1,815	1,473	2,138	2,309	1,985	30	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,193	4,937	2,832	1,602	1,641	1,664	1,358	43	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	8,639	5,964	3,721	2,971	1,581	1,469	1,195	36	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	9,733	7,444	4,431	3,531	3,709	3,293	2,850	9	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	12,319	10,278	6,859	5,227	5,022	4,490	5,701	71	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	13,623	11,736	7,981	6,904	7,222	5,451	6,969	58	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	13,907	11,436	7,864	7,078	7,017	5,382	6,646	47	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	12,972	10,763	7,036	7,125	5,346	3,777	4,772	73	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	12,002	9,397	6,245	7,425	3,940	2,881	3,568	24	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	10,954	8,045	5,635	5,823	3,247	2,376	2,896	25	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	10,245	7,030	5,238	5,785	2,834	2,052	2,626	54	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	8,902	5,980	5,156	5,492	2,792	2,043	2,627	7	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	9,296	6,687	5,343	4,561	1,977	1,507	1,772	245	31,388
Total	136,952	106,124	71,968	68,029	53,510	43,348	49,182	1,066	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Age is calculated based on date of birth and start date of the enrolment.

Table 4: Essential Skills enrolments by employment status and academic year

Academic Year	Employment Status				Total
	Employed	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,349	972	514	1,175	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,055	2,281	967	3,805	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	2,937	3,081	1,469	5,580	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	3,977	4,073	3,198	6,014	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	3,403	5,343	3,056	8,468	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	5,993	6,390	5,101	8,092	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	11,453	7,803	9,683	6,061	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	15,779	10,237	18,043	5,908	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	21,711	11,505	21,085	5,643	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	20,213	12,688	22,213	4,263	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	16,842	11,566	19,029	4,427	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	12,979	11,237	18,074	3,192	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	11,784	9,899	16,024	1,294	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	11,875	9,140	12,273	2,576	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	11,711	7,762	11,307	2,219	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	9,203	8,530	11,039	2,616	31,388
Total	163,264	122,507	173,075	71,333	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 5: Essential Skills enrolments by gender and academic year

Academic Year	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,992	2,018	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	4,996	4,112	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	6,495	6,572	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	7,959	9,303	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	10,578	9,692	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	14,586	10,990	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	18,271	16,729	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	26,274	23,693	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	31,755	28,189	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	31,253	28,124	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	28,175	23,689	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	24,570	20,912	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	21,057	17,944	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	19,572	16,292	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	18,148	14,851	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	17,338	14,050	31,388
Total	283,019	247,160	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 6: Essential Skills enrolments by deprivation quintiles and academic year

Academic Year	SOA MDM Quintile						Total
	Group 1 - Most Deprived	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5 - Least Deprived	Not Known	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,187	911	646	434	323	509	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,790	2,131	1,698	1,157	857	475	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	4,250	2,813	2,479	1,873	1,120	532	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,315	3,819	3,279	2,559	1,678	612	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,785	4,421	3,884	2,859	1,994	327	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	8,168	5,478	5,117	3,870	2,556	387	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	10,440	7,938	7,250	5,158	3,726	488	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	14,220	11,506	9,826	7,796	5,511	1,108	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	16,720	13,806	11,802	9,768	6,400	1,448	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	16,802	13,885	11,691	9,395	6,190	1,414	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	14,760	11,980	10,493	8,237	5,247	1,147	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	13,007	10,579	9,103	6,987	4,487	1,319	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	10,719	8,769	8,097	5,924	4,188	1,304	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	9,892	8,185	7,613	5,601	3,683	890	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	9,096	7,710	6,816	5,211	3,505	661	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	8,248	7,183	6,354	5,508	3,390	705	31,388
Total	152,399	121,114	106,148	82,337	54,855	13,326	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18. Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

The group 1 quintile is the most deprived, while the group 5 quintile is the least deprived group of areas across NI.

Table 7: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and academic year

Academic Year	Subject			Total
	Literacy	Numeracy	ICT	
Up to 31 July 2003	2,607	1,403	-	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	5,938	3,170	-	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	8,217	4,850	-	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	9,835	7,427	-	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	10,431	9,578	261	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	12,382	12,389	805	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	16,005	16,178	2,817	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	18,523	18,685	12,759	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	22,137	23,121	14,686	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	21,467	22,770	15,140	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	18,702	20,166	12,996	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	15,893	16,960	12,629	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	13,042	14,279	11,680	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	12,122	13,277	10,465	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	11,386	12,232	9,381	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	10,551	12,054	8,783	31,388
Total	209,238	208,539	112,402	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 8: Essential Skills enrolments by subject and age band

Subject	Age band				Total
	16-19	20-44	45+	Unknown	
Literacy	118,952	72,750	16,943	593	209,238
Numeracy	125,365	69,523	13,268	383	208,539
ICT	70,727	22,614	18,971	90	112,402
Total	315,044	164,887	49,182	1,066	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 9: Essential Skills enrolments by gender, subject and academic year

Academic Year	Literacy			Numeracy			ICT			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Up to 31 July 2003	1,282	1,325	2,607	710	693	1,403	-	-	-	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	3,262	2,676	5,938	1,734	1,436	3,170	-	-	-	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	4,060	4,157	8,217	2,435	2,415	4,850	-	-	-	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	4,639	5,196	9,835	3,320	4,107	7,427	-	-	-	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	5,607	4,824	10,431	4,812	4,766	9,578	159	102	261	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	7,310	5,072	12,382	6,761	5,628	12,389	515	290	805	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	8,740	7,265	16,005	7,947	8,231	16,178	1,584	1,233	2,817	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	10,262	8,261	18,523	9,436	9,249	18,685	6,576	6,183	12,759	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	12,323	9,814	22,137	11,801	11,320	23,121	7,631	7,055	14,686	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	11,903	9,564	21,467	11,401	11,369	22,770	7,949	7,191	15,140	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	10,680	8,022	18,702	10,418	9,748	20,166	7,077	5,919	12,996	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	9,137	6,756	15,893	8,759	8,201	16,960	6,674	5,955	12,629	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	7,531	5,511	13,042	7,397	6,882	14,279	6,129	5,551	11,680	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	6,942	5,180	12,122	6,863	6,414	13,277	5,767	4,698	10,465	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	6,594	4,792	11,386	6,458	5,774	12,232	5,096	4,285	9,381	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	6,121	4,430	10,551	6,277	5,777	12,054	4,940	3,843	8,783	31,388
Total	116,393	92,845	209,238	106,529	102,010	208,539	60,097	52,305	112,402	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 10: Essential Skills enrolments by provider and academic year

Academic Year	Provider			Total
	FE Colleges	DfE Training Programmes	Other	
Up to 31 July 2003	3,701	53	256	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	6,207	1,784	1,117	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	8,479	2,099	2,489	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	11,855	2,941	2,466	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	13,426	5,676	1,168	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	17,160	7,405	1,011	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	22,204	12,796	-	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	33,796	16,171	-	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	38,256	21,688	-	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	39,137	20,240	-	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	34,058	17,806	-	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	30,643	14,839	-	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	27,368	11,633	-	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	23,999	11,865	-	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	19,774	13,225	-	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	19,392	11,996	-	31,388
Total	349,455	172,217	8,507	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

The category 'Other' includes enrolments registered against Proteus, Workers' Educational Association, Educational Guidance Service for Adults and the Ulster People's College.

Table 11: Essential Skills enrolments by college and academic year

Academic Year	College						Non-FE College	Total
	Belfast Metropolitan	Northern Regional	North West Regional	South Eastern Regional	Southern Regional	South West		
Up to 31 July 2003	965	533	986	195	529	493	309	4,010
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	1,382	1,237	991	747	998	852	2,901	9,108
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	1,875	1,789	1,094	1,072	1,408	1,241	4,588	13,067
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	2,049	2,257	1,547	2,270	2,394	1,338	5,407	17,262
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	2,525	2,245	1,741	2,920	2,302	1,693	6,844	20,270
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	3,210	3,027	2,694	3,200	2,787	2,242	8,416	25,576
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	4,147	3,812	3,536	4,232	3,510	2,967	12,796	35,000
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	5,242	5,335	4,878	6,789	7,051	4,501	16,171	49,967
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	5,416	5,254	4,913	7,922	9,010	5,741	21,688	59,944
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	5,737	5,128	5,172	7,255	9,323	6,522	20,240	59,377
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	5,143	4,717	4,314	6,813	7,046	6,025	17,806	51,864
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	5,320	4,083	4,300	5,646	5,519	5,775	14,839	45,482
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	4,765	4,710	4,247	4,148	4,379	5,119	11,633	39,001
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	4,402	3,499	3,918	4,259	3,319	4,602	11,865	35,864
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	3,801	3,247	2,448	3,132	3,353	3,793	13,225	32,999
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	3,798	3,707	2,253	2,781	3,842	3,011	11,996	31,388
Total	59,777	54,580	49,032	63,381	66,770	55,915	180,724	530,179

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 12: Essential Skills qualifications issued by academic year

Academic Year	Number of qualifications
Up to 31 July 2003	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	30,259
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	22,031
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	18,395
Total	344,826

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 13: Essential Skills qualifications issued by level achieved and academic year

Academic Year	Level Achieved					Total
	Entry Level 1	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 3	Level 1	Level 2	
Up to 31 July 2003	-	-	-	238	78	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	380	455	833	1,484	291	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	740	987	2,850	689	199	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	773	1,336	3,623	2,633	1,326	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	655	1,164	3,433	4,231	2,944	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	598	1,244	3,658	5,012	4,685	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	306	928	3,116	5,374	5,429	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	394	906	3,138	10,534	10,361	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	472	1,025	3,444	14,089	16,307	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	517	1,088	3,634	14,273	20,582	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	579	1,103	3,353	12,861	21,485	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	460	1,016	3,922	10,530	24,923	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	487	822	2,495	8,740	18,909	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	426	755	2,389	8,404	18,285	30,259
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	318	699	2,120	6,678	12,216	22,031
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	453	778	2,537	5,864	8,763	18,395
Total	7,558	14,306	44,545	111,634	166,783	344,826

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 14: Essential Skills qualifications issued by age band and academic year

Academic Year	Age Band								Total
	16	17	18-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45+	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	15	34	44	47	72	56	46	2	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	192	721	327	497	718	513	409	66	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	191	1,517	847	560	715	733	718	184	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	178	2,659	1,857	1,014	1,251	1,415	1,237	80	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	392	4,217	2,999	1,216	1,243	1,246	1,026	88	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	518	5,341	4,002	1,545	1,250	1,251	1,076	214	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	543	5,466	4,075	1,743	1,095	913	826	492	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	1,221	7,134	6,070	2,869	2,457	2,283	2,750	549	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	1,497	9,221	8,768	4,042	3,467	3,215	4,546	581	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	2,367	9,603	9,412	4,706	4,485	3,732	4,725	1,064	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	3,131	9,751	8,832	4,434	4,408	3,412	4,410	1,003	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	3,511	10,789	9,172	4,824	4,618	3,281	3,675	981	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	2,999	8,525	7,612	3,492	3,096	2,310	2,548	871	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	3,864	8,377	7,012	3,114	2,529	1,891	2,309	1,163	30,259
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	2,818	5,628	5,257	2,308	1,863	1,299	1,737	1,121	22,031
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	2,489	4,663	4,403	1,834	1,481	1,140	1,444	941	18,395
Total	25,926	93,646	80,689	38,245	34,748	28,690	33,482	9,400	344,826

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 15: Essential Skills qualifications issued by gender and academic year

Academic Year	Gender			Total
	Male	Female	Unknown	
Up to 31 July 2003	155	161	-	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,077	1,366	-	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	3,140	2,325	-	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,284	4,407	-	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,850	5,577	-	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	8,582	6,615	-	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	9,187	5,966	-	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	13,570	11,763	-	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	18,430	16,907	-	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	21,364	18,720	10	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	20,484	18,887	10	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	21,956	18,884	11	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	16,747	14,697	9	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	16,614	13,645	-	30,259
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	12,346	9,635	50	22,031
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	10,525	7,859	11	18,395
Total	187,311	157,414	101	344,826

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 16: Essential Skills qualifications issued by subject and academic year

Academic Year	Subject			Total
	Literacy	Numeracy	ICT	
Up to 31 July 2003	175	141	-	316
1 August 2003 - 31 July 2004	2,040	1,403	-	3,443
1 August 2004 - 31 July 2005	3,231	2,234	-	5,465
1 August 2005 - 31 July 2006	5,680	4,011	-	9,691
1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007	6,626	5,656	145	12,427
1 August 2007 - 31 July 2008	7,464	7,428	305	15,197
1 August 2008 - 31 July 2009	7,429	7,319	405	15,153
1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010	11,376	10,661	3,296	25,333
1 August 2010 - 31 July 2011	13,125	14,293	7,919	35,337
1 August 2011 - 31 July 2012	15,143	16,357	8,594	40,094
1 August 2012 - 31 July 2013	14,375	16,267	8,739	39,381
1 August 2013 - 31 July 2014	17,694	15,461	7,696	40,851
1 August 2014 - 31 July 2015	11,155	12,511	7,787	31,453
1 August 2015 - 31 July 2016	10,646	11,748	7,865	30,259
1 August 2016 - 31 July 2017	7,542	8,221	6,268	22,031
1 August 2017 - 31 July 2018	6,612	6,823	4,960	18,395
Total	140,313	140,534	63,979	344,826

Source: Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change.

Table 17: Essential Skills performance analysis by subject since 2002/03

Subject	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate	Qualifications (awarding organisation dataset)	Achievement rate	Success rate
Literacy	207,441	185,906	89.6%	140,313	75.5%	67.6%
Numeracy	206,644	186,117	90.1%	140,534	75.5%	68.0%
ICT	111,732	97,888	87.6%	63,979	65.4%	57.3%
All Subjects	525,817	469,911	89.4%	344,826	73.4%	65.6%

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18; Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 18: Essential Skills performance analysis by gender since 2002/03

Gender	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate	Qualifications (awarding organisation dataset)	Achievement rate	Success rate
Male	280,730	255,577	91.0%	187,311	73.3%	66.7%
Female	245,087	214,334	87.5%	157,414	73.4%	64.2%
Unknown	-	-	N/A	101	N/A	N/A
Total	525,817	469,911	89.4%	344,826	73.4%	65.6%

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18; Awarding Organisations.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Qualifications figures are correct as at 30th September 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention, achievement and success rates are calculated are available in Annex 2.

Table 19: Essential Skills retention rate by age band since 2002/03

Age Band	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate
16	135,638	125,550	92.6%
17	104,934	95,242	90.8%
18-19	71,359	62,340	87.4%
20-24	67,723	61,291	90.5%
25-34	53,235	46,233	86.8%
35-44	43,073	37,256	86.5%
45+	48,794	41,110	84.3%
Unknown	1,061	889	N/A
Total	525,817	469,911	89.4%

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention rate is calculated are available in Annex 2.

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by age band due to differences in the way age is calculated for enrolments and qualifications (see Annex 2).

Table 20: Essential Skills retention rate by target level since 2002/03

Target level	Enrolments (enrolments dataset)	Completers (enrolments dataset)	Retention rate
Entry Level 1	10,057	8,781	87.3%
Entry Level 2	20,746	18,511	89.2%
Entry Level 3	58,705	52,356	89.2%
Level 1	239,538	217,313	90.7%
Level 2	190,587	170,783	89.6%
Not Known	6,184	2,167	N/A
Total	525,817	469,911	89.4%

Source: Essential Skills Enrolment Return (ESER) for 2002/03 to 2012/13 and Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Notes: Enrolments figures are correct as at 12th October 2018; they are provisional and are subject to change. Further details on how retention rate is calculated are available in Annex 2.

Achievement and success rates have not been calculated by level as students may qualify at a different level to the 'target level' at which they enrolled.

Annex 2: Definitions

Academic year

An academic year is defined as 1st August to 31st July.

Achieved level

This is the level the awarding organisation has indicated the individual has achieved within the Essential Skills framework.

Achievement rate

Achievement rate is defined as the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification, to the number of enrolments who complete their study.

'Completers' include any enrolments which have not been classified as 'Withdrawn' or 'Transferred', namely those with Student Status as 'Continuing', 'Completed' or 'Not Known'.

$$\text{Achievement rate} = \frac{\text{Number of achievements}}{\text{Number of completers}}$$

Age

For enrolments, age is calculated at 1st July of the previous academic year, based on the start date of the course.

For qualifications, age is calculated at the certification date.

Deprivation

The analysis presented in the publication utilises 5 groups or quintiles of Super Output Areas (SOAs), based on relative level of deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM). Enrolments are assigned to SOAs using the postcodes provided on enrolment records.

On 23rd November 2017, NIMDM 2017 replaced NIMDM 2010 as the official measure of relative deprivation in Northern Ireland. This provides a mechanism for ranking the 890 SOAs from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890). Accordingly, SOAs ranked 1 to 178 form the most deprived group relative to all other SOAs (Quintile 1), while those ranked 713 to 890 form the least deprived group (Quintile 5).

For further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland please follow this link:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

Enrolments

The enrolment returns are merged and a process is in place to deal with any duplicate enrolments. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments.

Individuals

Individual students are determined using name and date of birth, and allocated to a particular academic year based on the start date of their first registration. Individuals can enrol in more than one course.

Qualifications

Total qualifications are taken to be the sum of all records within the Essential Skills Qualifications Return.

Retention rate

Retention rate is defined as the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study, to the number of enrolments.

$$\text{Retention rate} = \frac{\text{Number of completers}}{\text{Number of enrolments}}$$

Success rate

Success rate is the overall measure of performance, which is the proportion of the number of enrolments who complete their study and achieve their qualification, to the number of enrolments.

$$\text{Success rate} = \frac{\text{Number of achievements}}{\text{Number of enrolments}}$$

or,

$$\text{Retention rate} \times \text{Achievement rate}$$

Target Level

When an individual enrolls on an Essential Skills course, they are assessed over a 6-8 week period to establish the level they are functioning at. They are then normally targeted at a level higher than their assessed level. Literacy and Numeracy courses are available for all five levels, whereas ICT is only available for Level 1 and Level 2. The ability typically demonstrated at each level is detailed below:

- **Entry Level 1** is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 5-7. Adults with ICT Entry Level 1 skills are able to find and select information from an ICT-based source and follow recommended safe practices. Adults below Entry Level 1 may not be able to write short messages to family or select floor numbers in lifts.
- **Entry Level 2** is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 7-9. Adults with ICT Entry Level 2 skills are able to use ICT to communicate, as well as enter and edit small amounts of information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience. Adults below Entry Level 2 may not be able to describe a child's symptoms to a doctor or use a cash point to withdraw cash.

- **Entry Level 3** is the national school curriculum equivalent for attainment at age 9-11. Adults with ICT Entry Level 3 skills are able to interact with and use an ICT system to meet needs, as well as present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience. Adults with skills below Entry Level 3 may not be able to understand price labels on pre-packaged food or pay household bills.
- **Level 1** is equivalent to GCSE grades D-G. Adults with ICT Level 1 skills are able to select and use a variety of appropriate sources of information, as well as enter, organise, develop format and bring together information to suit content and purpose. Adults with skills below Level 1 may not be able to read bus or train timetables or check the pay and deductions on a wage slip.
- **Level 2** is equivalent to GCSE grades A*-C. Adults with ICT Level 2 skills are able to use a variety of appropriate sources of information and evaluate its fitness for purpose, as well as evaluate and use different methods of organising and presenting information, taking into account fitness for purpose and audience. Adults with skills below Level 2 may not be able to compare products and services for the best buy, or work out a household budget.

Annex 3: Technical Notes

1. Enrolment information for FE colleges is sourced from the Essential Skills enrolment return for the academic years 2002/03 to 2012/13 and from the Consolidated Data Return (CDR) for 2013/14 to 2017/18. For DfE's training and employment programmes, the source is the Essential Skills extract from the Client Management System (CMS).
2. Both Essential Skills enrolment returns are merged and a process is in place to deal with any duplicate enrolments. The resultant file is then analysed to present the total number of Essential Skills enrolments.
3. FE colleges have indicated that some 2002/03 Essential Skills enrolments were collated on a paper basis and registered with Awarding Organisations without being recorded on a computerised enrolment management system. Consequently, these enrolments are not available and are not included in this analysis.
4. The enrolment information is correct as at 12th October 2018. However, as some erroneous records are excluded from the Essential Skills enrolment database, figures are provisional and are subject to change.
5. The source of the qualification information is the quarterly data provided by the awarding organisations.
6. Qualification figures are correct as at 30th September 2018. However, figures may be subject to change due to any amendments in the qualification data supplied later by the awarding organisations.
7. Any enrolment records that have been recorded as a 'transfer' should have an accompanying second enrolment record (the one they have transferred onto). These will be accounted for and only one record will remain for analysis.
8. In terms of outcome, the original enrolment recorded as a transfer will not have any outcome recorded against it and therefore the transferred enrolment cannot be measured in terms of performance. Consequently, any enrolments recorded as transfers are excluded from performance analysis and are not included in final year enrolment counts.
9. Performance analysis is determined over the life of the Strategy from 2002/03 to 2017/18. No individual academic year retention, achievement or success rates are calculated, as two separate datasets are utilised to produce the performance rates; one dataset is used to determine enrolments and one for qualifications. An individual can enrol in one academic year, whereas the qualification may not be issued until the next academic year. Consequently, individual year performance analysis may be skewed due to this scenario and, therefore, is not calculated within this publication.

Further Enquiries

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

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