

Higher Education Statistical Fact Sheet 4: Enrolments at NI Higher Education Institutions by available equality categories: 2017/18 to 2021/22

- In 2021/22, 14% of students enrolled at NI HEIs self-reported as having a disability; an increase from 13% in 2020/21.
- In 2021/22, of those NI domiciled students enrolled at NI HEIs who were asked to provide the religion they were brought up in, 31% of students stated 'Protestant', 52% stated 'Roman Catholic' and the remainder were categorised as 'Other' (2%), 'No Religion' (10%) or 'Unknown' (5%).

Disability Status ⁽¹⁾	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Known disability	5,610	6,195	7,215	8,465	9,630
No known disability	48,410	49,120	51,860	57,780	59,940
Total	54,020	55,290	59,075	66,245	69,565

Religion ^{(2) (4) (5)}	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Protestant	12,525	12,960	13,145	13,915	12,920
Roman Catholic	20,210	20,640	21,180	22,960	22,010
Other	2,190	1,105	510	400	680
Unknown	3,605	3,355	2,910	1,840	2,080
No Religion	2,800	3,650	4,010	4,360	4,260
Total	41,325	41,705	41,755	43,480	41,950

Age	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
20 and under	18,875	18,810	19,135	20,745	21,790
21 to 24	15,745	16,280	16,840	18,795	18,085
25 to 29	6,050	6,470	7,755	9,820	10,800
30 and over	13,355	13,730	15,345	16,885	18,895
Unknown	0	0	5	0	0
Total	54,020	55,290	59,075	66,245	69,565

Sex ⁽⁷⁾	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Male	23,085	23,160	24,350	27,105	28,665
Female	30,935	32,130	34,725	39,140	40,800
Total	54,020	55,290	59,075	66,245	69,565

Ethnicity ^{(1) (3)}	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
White	46,110	46,700	46,065	48,740	48,365
Irish Traveller	10	10	10	5	25
Black	270	335	345	350	430
Indian	220	270	320	345	330
Pakistani	135	135	130	120	120
Bangladeshi	50	40	30	40	50
Chinese	180	165	145	155	170
Other Asian	210	250	285	325	335
Mixed	380	410	435	510	545
Other	135	140	150	160	175
Unknown	560	655	1,565	1,370	1,750
Total	48,260	49,120	49,480	52,125	52,290

Marital Status ⁽²⁾	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Single (never married or never in civil partnership)	34,160	34,460	34,490	37,085	35,550
Married or in civil partnership	3,850	4,065	4,350	4,505	4,200
Separated (but still legally married or in civil partnership)	230	240	270	260	235
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	215	220	260	275	225
Widowed	40	40	80	45	40
Co-habiting	650	710	875	1080	995
Unknown	2,180	1,975	1,430	240	705
Total	41,325	41,705	41,755	43,480	41,950

Dependants ⁽²⁾	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
Young people/children (YP/C)	3,930	4,095	4,185	4,650	4,330
Other relative/friends (OR/F)	280	290	340	305	325
Both YP/C and OR/F	370	400	450	475	455
No dependants	35,365	35,605	34,935	37,460	36,100
Unknown	1,380	1,310	1,840	590	740
Total	41,325	41,705	41,755	43,480	41,950

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. Information on disability and ethnicity is collected on the basis of a student's self assessment.
2. Information on religion, marital status and dependants is only collected for NI domiciled students studying at NI HE institutions.
3. Information on ethnicity is only collected for UK domiciled students studying at NI HE institutions.
4. Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and therefore can have a high non-response rate.
5. Enrolments at the OU (where the national centre is located in NI) have been removed from the figures for religion, marital status and dependants due to high levels of unknowns.
6. To avoid a duplication of foundation year figures across HE institutions and Further Education Colleges, Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College changed their return to HESA during 2019/20 and no longer report on foundation degrees that are offered as part of a validated collaborative arrangement with Further Education Colleges. Historical figures in this fact sheet have been backdated to reflect this change.
7. For Sex the sum of Male and Female enrolments may not match the total shown due to some students being labelled as "Other", these are not included as a separate category but are included in the total.
8. To prevent the identification of individuals, figures in the attached table 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.
9. Percentages are based on unrounded figures and rounded to the nearest integer.

Links

Data from this fact sheet are available in open data format at the following link:

[Higher Education Statistical Factsheets](#)

More Higher Education statistics are available from:

[Higher Education Statistics and Research](#)