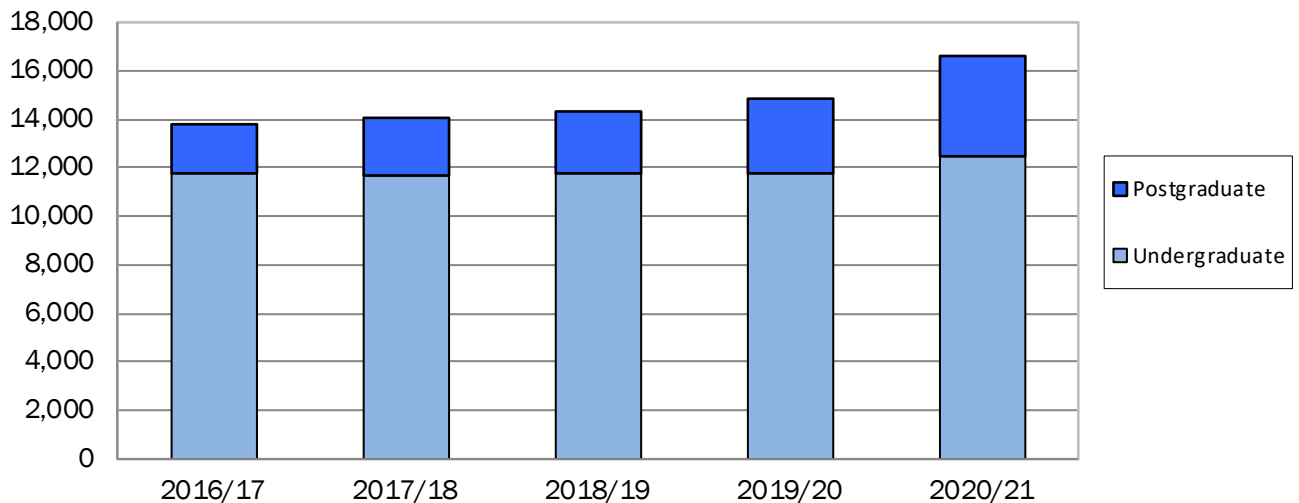


Higher Education Statistical Fact Sheet 6: Enrolments on STEM related courses at NI Higher Education Institutions - 2016/17 to 2020/21

Section 1: Enrolments on Narrow STEM related courses at NI Higher Education Institutions - 2016/17 to 2020/21

- Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the total number of students enrolled on Narrow STEM related courses at NI Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) increased by 2,775 (20%), from 13,835 to 16,610.
- Although there was a net increase in the number of Narrow STEM enrolments at NI HEIs between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the proportion of such enrolments decreased slightly from 26% to 25% over the same period. This occurred in the context of a 22% increase in total enrolments during this time period, from 54,195 in 2016/17 to 66,245 in 2020/21.
- Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the total number of students enrolled on Narrow STEM related courses at NI HEIs increased by 1,715 (12%), from 14,895 to 16,610.
- Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the number of undergraduate enrolments on Narrow STEM related courses at NI HEIs increased from 11,760 to 12,490 (up 6%). Over the same time period, there was nearly a twofold increase in postgraduate Narrow STEM enrolments, from 2,075 to 4,120, in part due to the continued uptake of postgraduate loans for Master's students introduced in 2017/18.

Enrolments on Narrow STEM courses at NI HEIs - 2016/17 to 2020/21



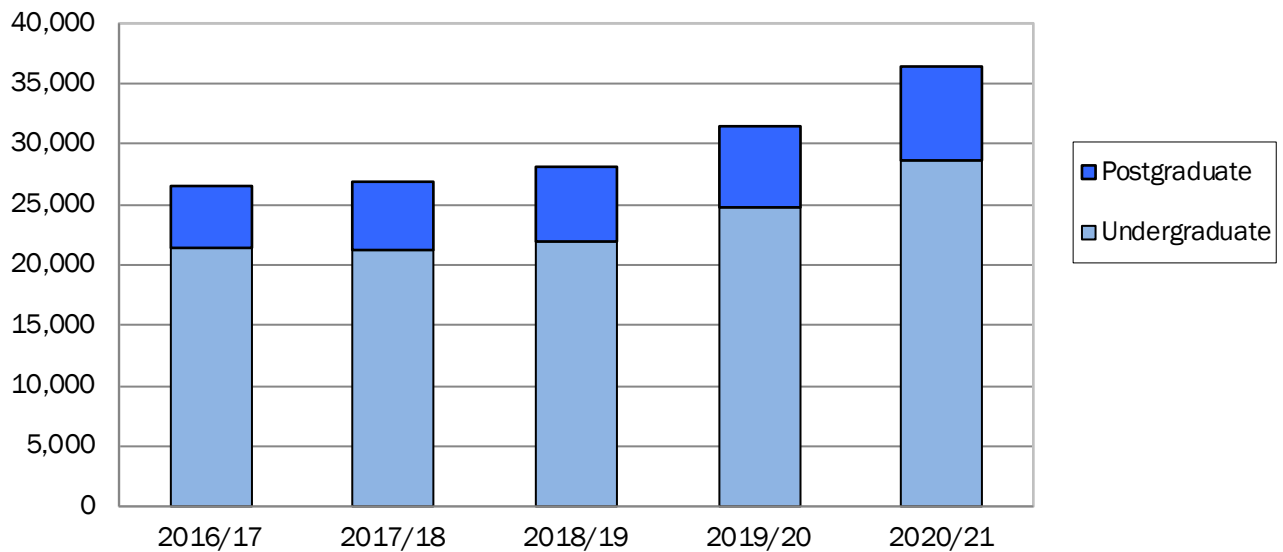
Year	Narrow STEM Enrolments				All Enrolments
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total	Proportion	
2016/17	11,760	2,075	13,835	26%	54,195
2017/18	11,715	2,345	14,060	26%	54,020
2018/19	11,815	2,540	14,360	26%	55,290
2019/20	11,780	3,115	14,895	25%	59,075
2020/21	12,490	4,120	16,610	25%	66,245

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Section 2: Enrolments on Broad STEM¹ related courses at NI Higher Education Institutions 2016/17 to 2020/21

- Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, the total number of students enrolled on Broad STEM related courses at NI Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) rose from 26,595 to 36,405 (a 37% increase).
- During the same time period, the proportion of Broad STEM enrolments increased from 49% to 55%.
- Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the total number of students enrolled on Broad STEM related courses at NI HEIs increased by 4,925 (16%), from 31,480 to 36,405.
- Between 2016/17 and 2020/21, undergraduate enrolments on Broad STEM related courses at NI HEIs increased from 21,355 to 28,685 (a rise of 34%). The number of postgraduate Broad STEM enrolments increased from 5,240 to 7,720 (a rise of 47%) over the same period, in part due to the continued uptake of postgraduate loans for Master's students introduced in 2017/18.

Enrolments on Broad STEM courses at NI HEIs - 2016/17 to 2020/21



Year	Broad STEM Enrolments				All Enrolments
	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Total	Proportion	
2016/17	21,355	5,240	26,595	49%	54,195
2017/18	21,290	5,615	26,900	50%	54,020
2018/19	21,970	6,065	28,040	51%	55,290
2019/20	24,725	6,755	31,480	53%	59,075
2020/21	28,685	7,720	36,405	55%	66,245

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. 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, CAH version 1.3.4 has been retrospectively applied to data for 2019/20. For more information, please refer to HESA's webpage on [HECoS and CAH](#). Information on subject area provided in this fact sheet is based on CAH level 1, comprising 21 groups; for the purposes of STEM analysis though Geographical and environmental studies have been split into natural sciences and social sciences.
2. This change in subject coding systems has an impact on the STEM groupings presented in this fact sheet. The STEM groupings presented for the years 2016/17 to 2018/19 are based on the JACS coding system. Narrow STEM related courses include: Biological Sciences; Physical Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Computer Science; and Engineering and Technology. Broad STEM related courses include: Medicine and Dentistry; Subjects allied to Medicine; Biological Sciences; Veterinary Sciences; Agriculture and related subjects; Physical Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Computer Science; Engineering and Technology; and Architecture, Building and Planning.
3. The STEM groupings presented for 2019/20 use the CAH subject groups. STEM definitions 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 level 1 subject codes (derived from HECoS), with the exception of CAH26 (Geographical 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.
4. Based on CAH subject groupings, narrow STEM related courses include: Biological and sports sciences; Psychology; Physical sciences; Mathematical sciences; Engineering and technology; Computing; and Geographical and environmental studies (natural sciences). Broad STEM related courses include: 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; Geographical and environmental studies (natural sciences); and Architecture, building and planning.
5. From the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year, DfE extended its student support package, with tuition fee loans being made available for part-time undergraduate and full-time distance learning study students, and postgraduate students studying certain courses. Northern Ireland students starting Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, or Taught or Research Master's courses in Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland could apply for a loan (up to £5,500 per course in 2020/21) to help with fee costs. The fees are paid direct to the university to cover tuition fees.
6. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding, figures may not sum to totals.
7. Percentages are based on unrounded figures and rounded to the nearest integer.
8. From the 2014/15 academic year onwards, within DfE publications, Open University students are counted within the country where the national centre is located.

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](#)