

Awarding gaps: From analysis to national targets

Sarah Howls
Head of Access and Participation

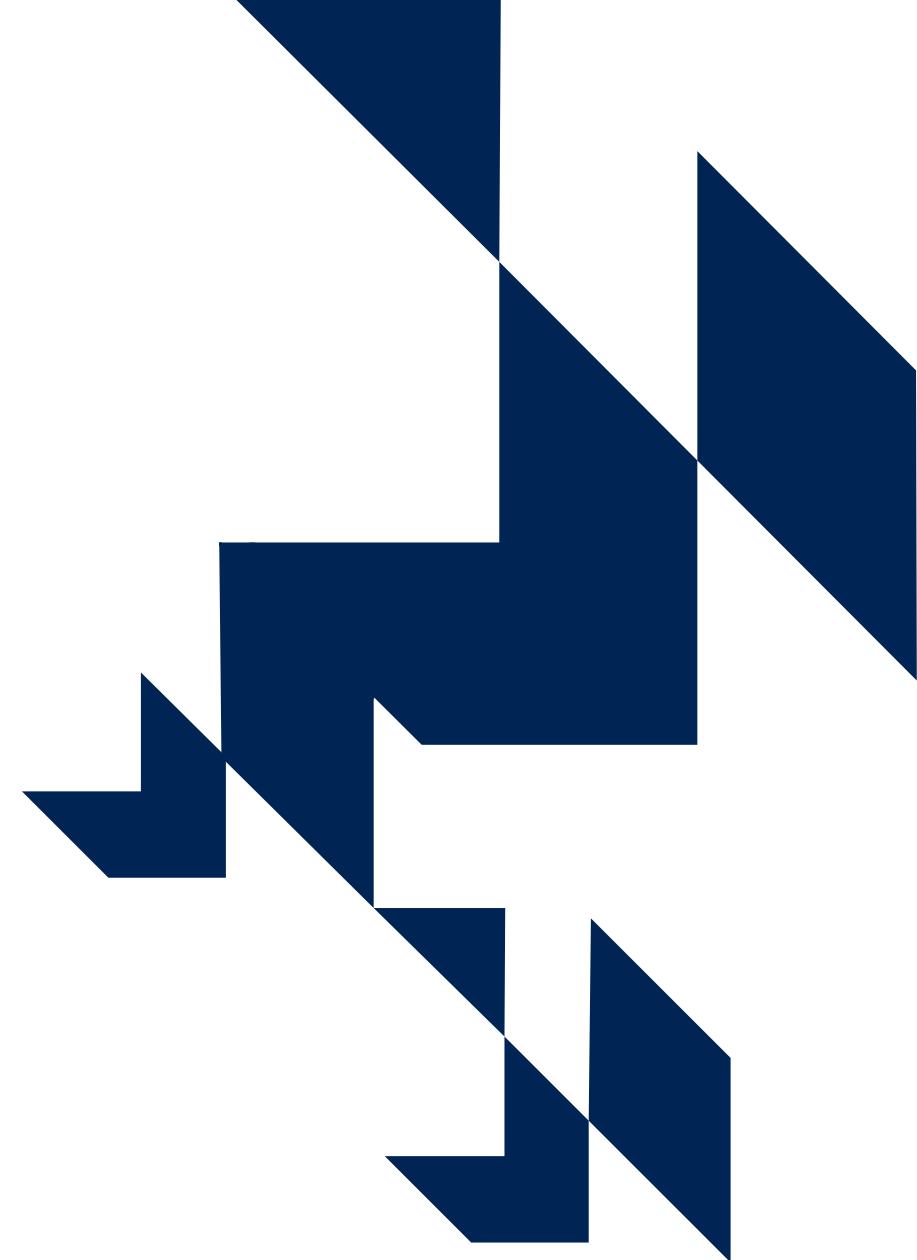
03 December 2020

Follow us on Twitter at
@officestudents

The early years

- Why the difference? A closer look at higher education minority ethnic students and graduates, Department for Education and Skills, 2004
- Gender gaps in higher education participation, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2008
- Ethnicity, gender and degree attainment: final report, Equality Challenge Unit, 2008
- What do minority ethnic graduate do?, Prospects, 2008
- The National Student Survey 2005-07: Findings and trends, HEFCE 2008

HEFCE analysis



Student ethnicity: profile and progression of entrants to full-time, first degree study, HEFCE, 2010

- Aim was to build on existing body of work
- Range of quantitative information brought together for first time
- Followed a cohort of entrants to full-time, first degree courses in 2002-03
- Examined entrant profile, continuation rates and attainment
- Used HESA student records from 2002-03 to 2006-07

Key findings: entry

- At least 20 per cent of young entrants in each minority ethnic group came from and studied in London (3 per cent white)
- Black entrants older on average – 43 per cent of Black entrants 21 or over compared to 20 percent or less for all other groups
- Black young entrants more likely to come from LPNs than white entrants
- Lower proportion of Black students entered with A levels compare to other groups: 81 per cent young and 10 per cent mature
- More Black entrants study at institutions with lower entry qualification profiles (lower tariff)
- Ethnic minority entrants concentrated in smaller number of institutions

Key findings: continuation

- Highest continuation rates for young Chinese student = 88 percent
- Young white students = 86 per cent
- Young Black students = 82 per cent
- Young Pakistani and Bangladeshi students = 79 per cent
- Highest continuation rates for mature white students = 79 percent
- Mature Chinese students = 71 per cent
- Mature Black students = 67 per cent
- Mature Pakistani and Bangladeshi students = 63 per cent

Key findings: attainment

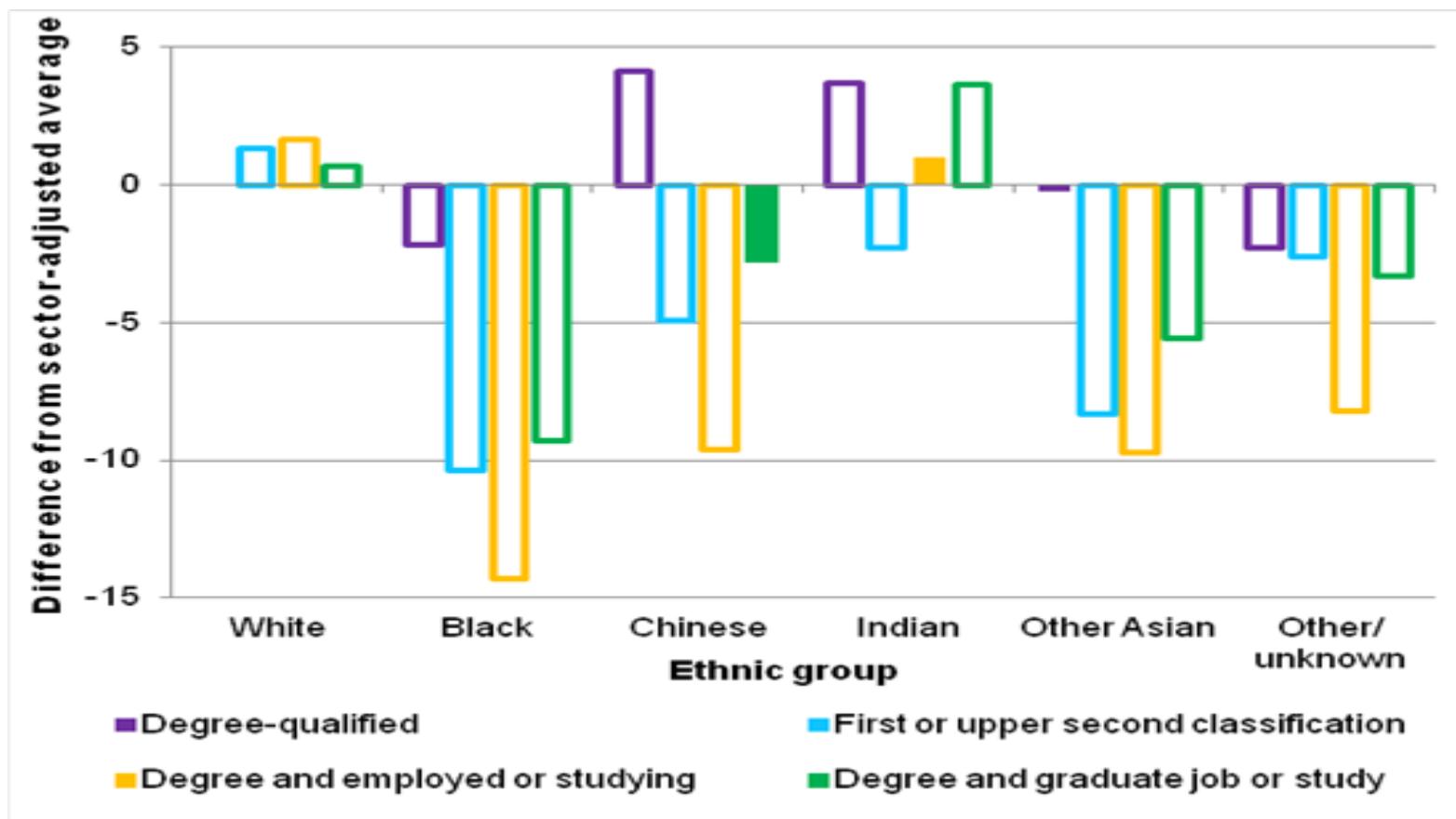
- Proportion of young white students awarded first or upper second was 25 percentage points higher than the rates for Black students and 20 percentage points higher than Pakistani and Bangladeshi students
- For mature students: 25 per cent of Black student awarded first or upper second compared to 29 per cent for Pakistani and Bangladeshi students and 61 percent for white students
- Some of the gap can be explained through profiles but still very large gaps even when those profiles taken into account.

Higher education and beyond: Outcomes from full-time first degree study, HEFCE 2013

- Examined degree outcome and employment circumstances of young, UK domiciled students starting a full-time first degree in 2006-07 at an HEI
- Four possible outcomes examined:
 - Achieving a degree
 - Achieving a first or upper second class degree
 - Achieving a degree and continuing to employment or further study
 - Achieving a degree and continuing to graduate employment or further study.
- Used sector adjusted averages – took account of entry qualifications, subject area of study, sex and ethnicity to calculate the expected performance outcome for the student profile for each group.

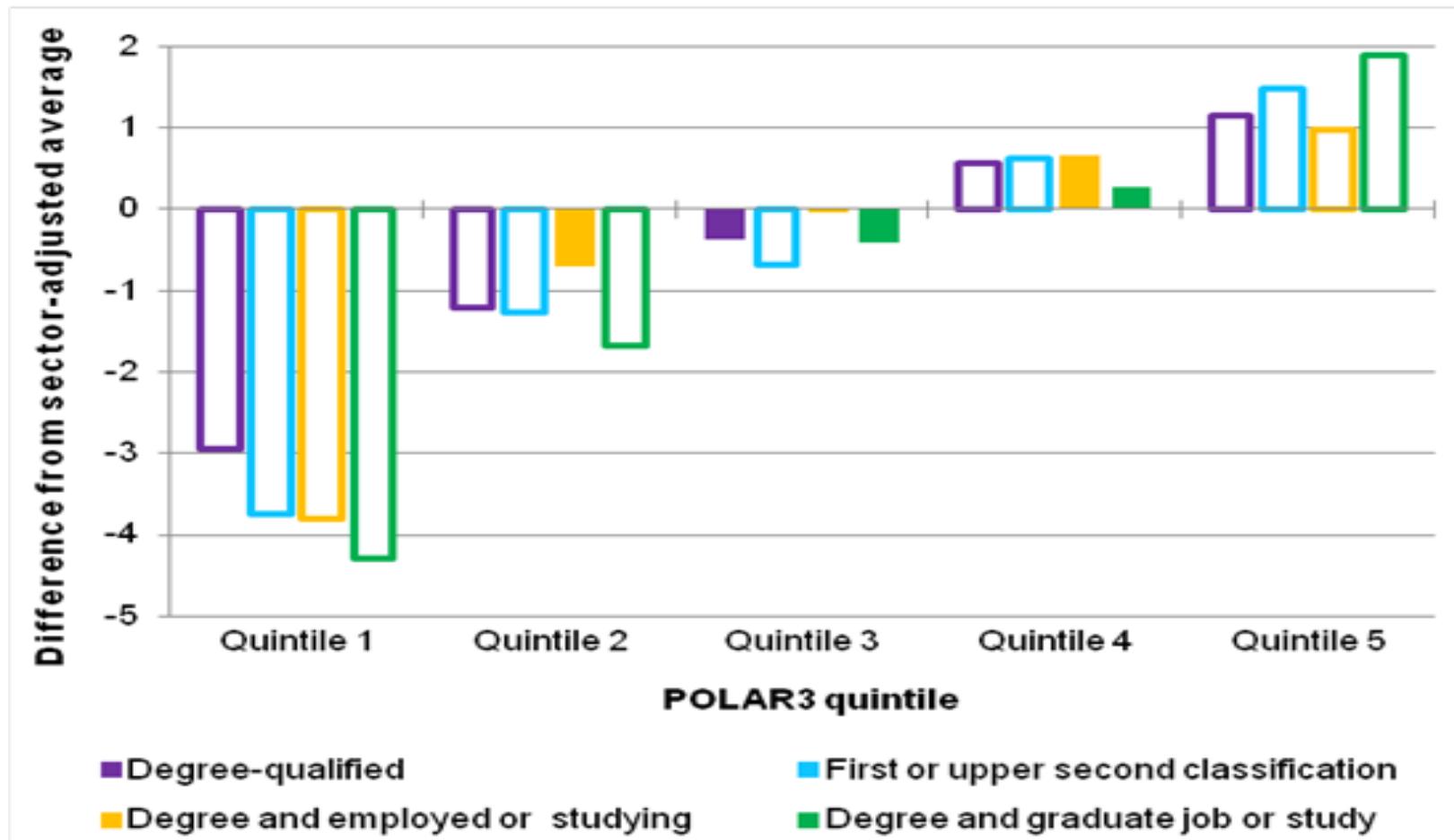
Key findings

Percentage point difference of the outcome for sector adjusted average for all four outcomes, split by ethnicity



Similar for POLAR

Percentage point difference of the outcome from the sector-adjusted average for each of the four outcomes, split by POLAR3 quintile

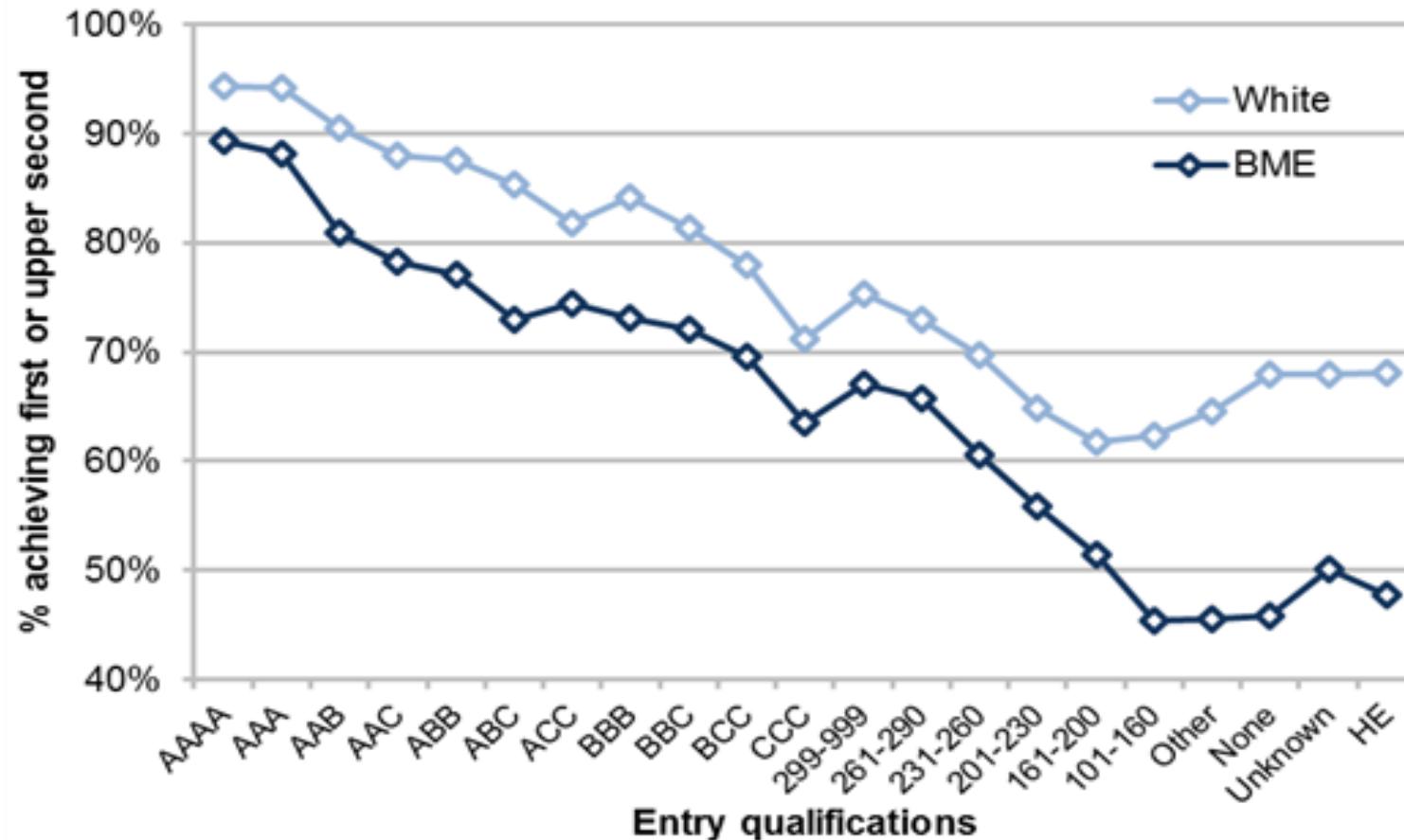


Differences in degree outcomes, HEFCE, 2014

- White students consistently achieve higher degree outcomes.
- 72 per cent of white students who entered with BBB at A level awarded first or upper second
- 56 per cent for Asian students with same A levels
- 53 per cent for Black students with same A levels

Differences in degree outcomes: the effect of subject and student characteristics, 2015

2013-14 graduates by ethnicity, entry qualification and degree classification



Causes of differences in student outcomes: Report to HEFCE by King's College London, ARC Network and University of Manchester, 2015

- Commissioned by HEFCE to understand the causes of the differences in outcomes observed in the data
- Explored continuation, attainment, progression to graduate employment and progression to further study
- Extensive literature review, stakeholder interviews, international comparative studies and researching approaches to addressing differential outcomes in nine HE providers.

Four explanatory factors

- Curricula and learning, including teaching and assessment practices
- Relationship between staff and students and among students - 'belonging'
- Social, cultural and economic capital
- Psychosocial and identity factors – extent to which students feel supported and encouraged.

Institutional approaches

- Creating sense of belonging
- Building social capital
- Enhancing student experience
- Develop wide ranging learning and teaching initiatives
- Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment developments
- Creation of more inclusive and supportive environments
- Build student contacts and networks
- Evaluation of interventions at early stages
- Cottage industry – lack of strategic, whole institution approaches

Delivering opportunities for students and maximising their success: evidence for policy and practice 2015-2020, HEFCE, 2015

- Need for more inclusive approach to learning, teaching and assessment
- Strategic frameworks within which multiple interventions can be developed, tested and embedded in their own context
- HEFCE programme to support providers in the development and rigorous testing of interventions to address differential outcomes
- Resulted in Addressing the barriers to student success programme.

OfS approach to access and participation

- In 2018, the OfS consulted on its approach to access and participation.
- Set targets for four of the OfS's key performance measures related to access and participation
- KPM 4 is to eliminate the unexplained gap in degree outcomes between white and black students by 2024-25, and to eliminate the absolute gap (the gap caused by both structural and unexplained factors) by 2030-21
- Ambitious objectives across the student lifecycle and so APPs set over 5 years to allow strategic approaches.
- Providers to undertake full assessment of own performance and set stretching, outcomes-based targets to close gaps for their students.

OfS approach to access and participation (2)

- Created an access and participation dataset with clear dashboards that show where each provider has gaps and progress made to close them
- Set high expectations in respect of evaluation – providers need to know what works in their contexts to close their gaps in student outcomes
- Expect providers to engage with and involve their students in the development, monitoring and delivery of their plans
- Implementation of reforms to take place from 2020-21 access and participation plans

[Go to detailed view →](#)[Help guide](#)

Student lifecycle stage

Access

Continuation

Attainment

Progression

Select a provider

* All English higher education providers

Show me:

[Rates](#)[Gaps](#)

Current mode and level:

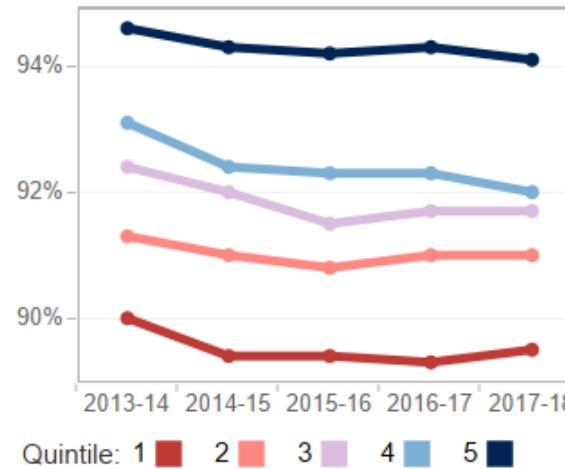
Mode: **Full-time or apprenticeship**

Level: **All undergraduates**

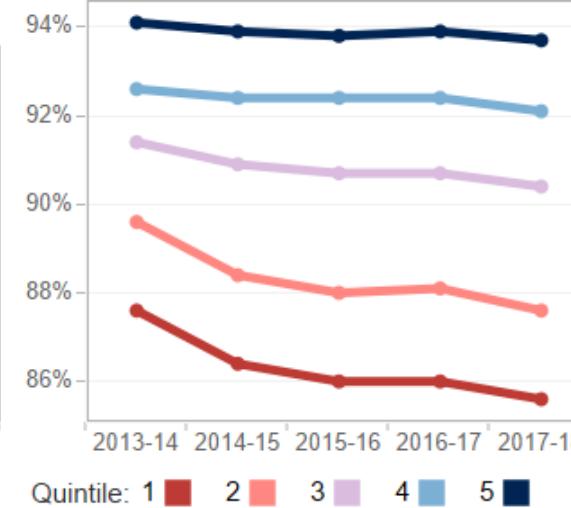
[Change mode or level](#)

Participation of local areas (POLAR4):
Continuation rates

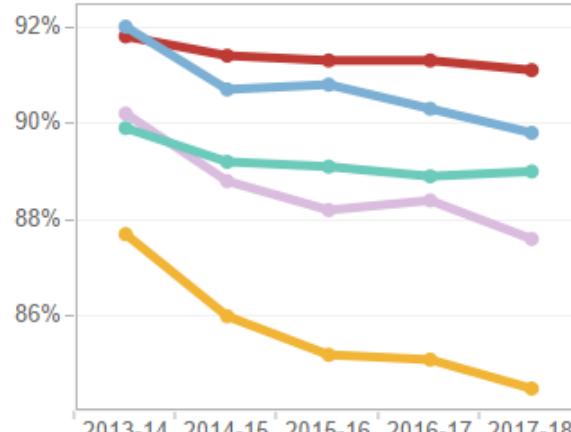
Relevant to OfS KPM 3



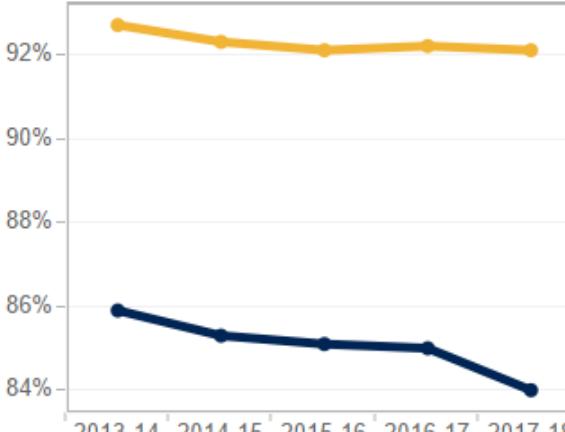
Deprivation (IMD 2015): Continuation rates



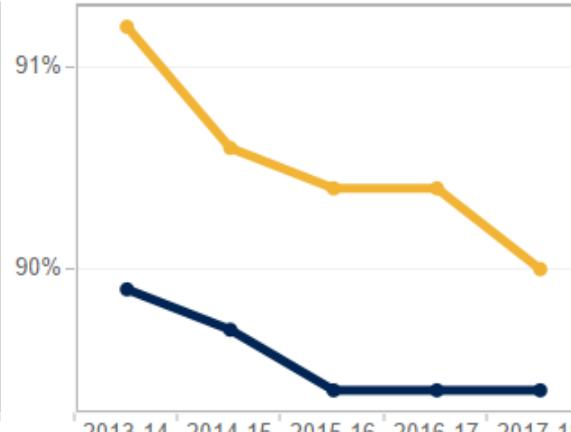
Ethnicity: Continuation rates



Age: Continuation rates



Disability: Continuation rates



Asian
Black

Mixed
Other

White
Young (under 21)

Disabled
Not known to be disabled

[Go to detailed view →](#)[Help guide](#)

Student lifecycle stage

Access

Continuation

Attainment

Progression

Select a provider

* All English higher education providers

Show me:

[Rates](#)[Gaps](#)

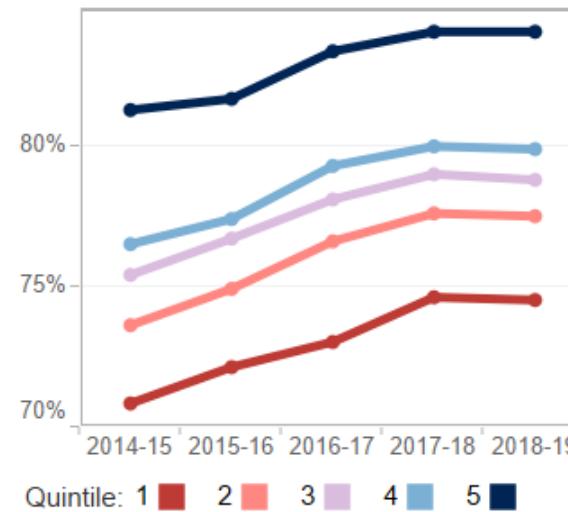
Current mode and level:

Mode: **Full-time or apprenticeship**

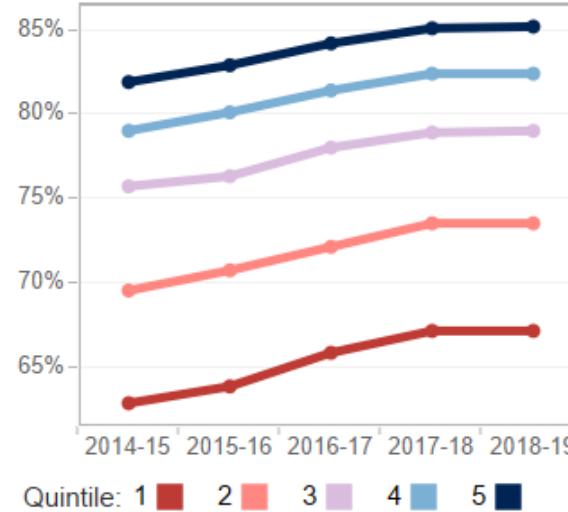
Level: **All undergraduates**

[Change mode or level](#)

Participation of local areas (POLAR4):
Attainment rates

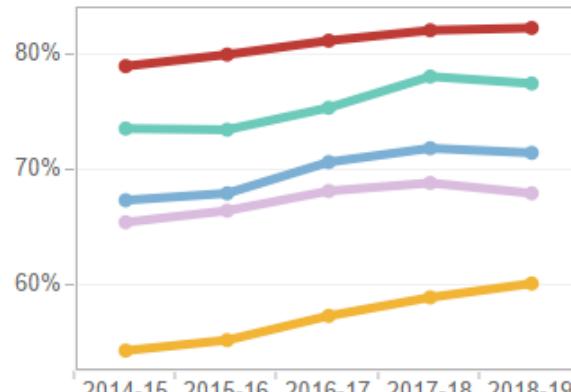


Deprivation (IMD 2015): Attainment rates



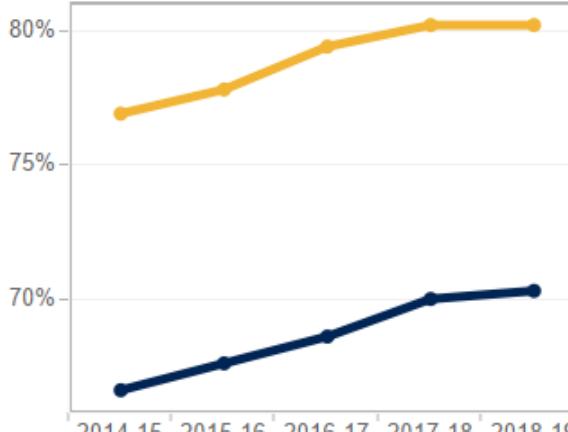
Ethnicity: Attainment rates

Relevant to OfS KPM 4



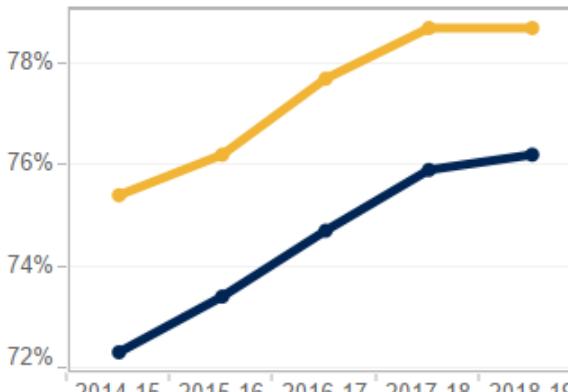
Age: Attainment rates

Relevant to OfS KPM 5



Disability: Attainment rates

Relevant to OfS KPM 5



[Go to detailed view →](#)[Help guide](#)

Student lifecycle stage

Access

Continuation

Attainment

Progression

Select a provider

* All English higher education providers

Show me:

[Rates](#)[Gaps](#)

Current mode and level:

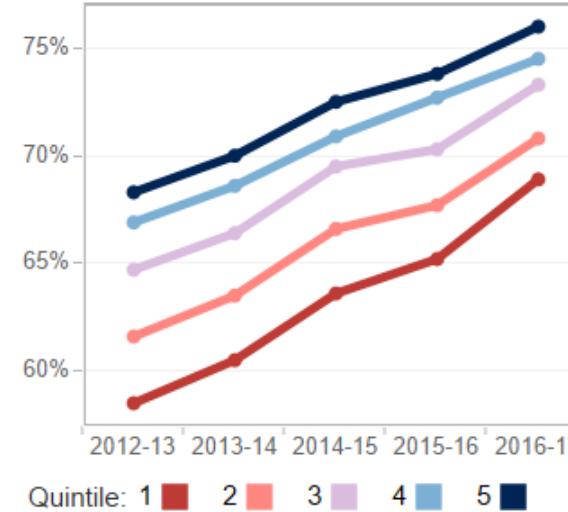
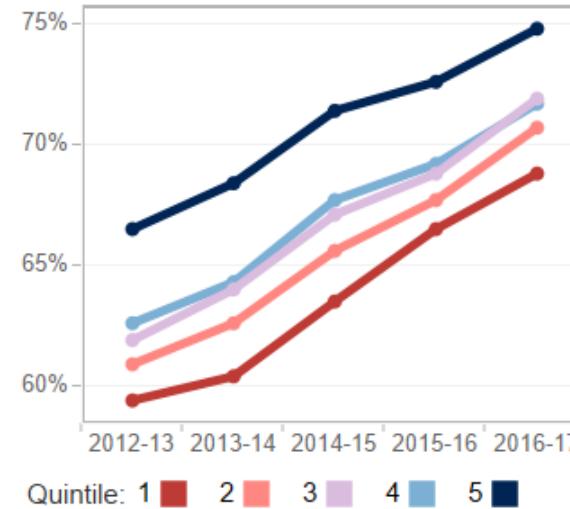
Mode: Full-time or apprenticeship

Level: All undergraduates

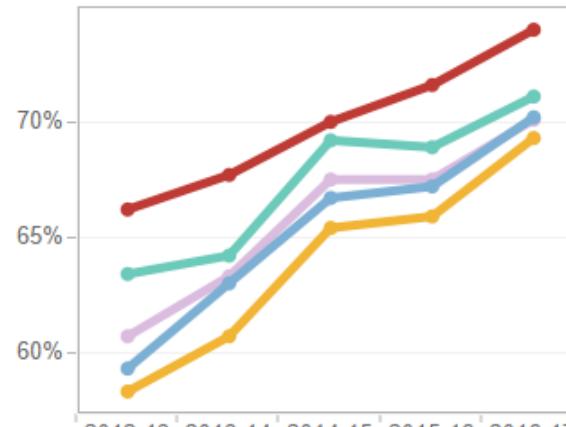
[Change mode or level](#)

Participation of local areas (POLAR4):
Progression rates

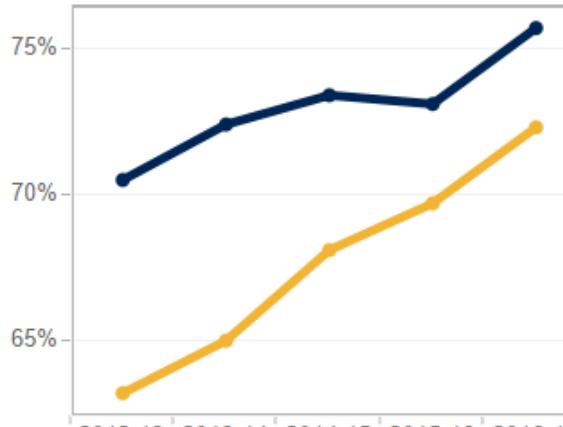
Deprivation (IMD 2015): Progression rates



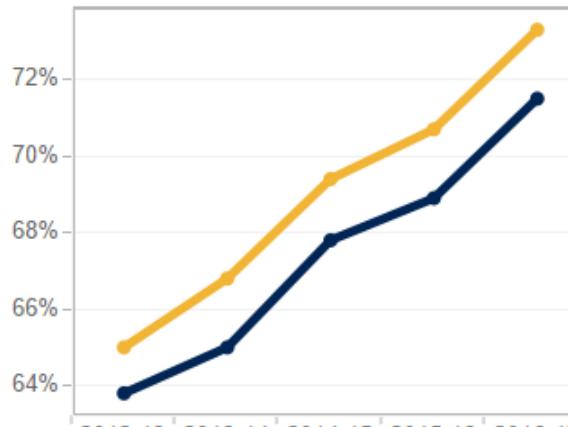
Ethnicity: Progression rates



Age: Progression rates



Disability: Progression rates



Asian Mixed White
Black Other

Mature (21 and over)
Young (under 21)

Disabled
Not known to be disabled

Transforming opportunity in higher education: an analysis of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plans, OfS 2020

- Analysed 2020-21 to 2024-25 APPs that had been assessed and approved as of 31 October 2019 – 171 in total.
- The highest number of targets were set in respect of ethnicity in the student success stage of the lifecycle – 238 targets. Second highest was LPN in the access stage at 128.
- If all providers that included targets in their plan meet those targets, the gap in degree outcomes between Black and white students will halve (from 22 to 11.2 percentage points)

Thank you for listening

Copyright ©

The copyright in this presentation is held either by the Office for Students (OfS) or by the originating authors. Please contact info@officeforstudents.org.uk for further information and re-use requests.