

Participation in Education and Vocational Training by 16-19 year olds in Northern Ireland 2018/19 to 2022/23

This report presents key details of the participation by 16- to 19-year-olds in education and vocational training in Northern Ireland (NI). In particular, the release considers pupils in Schools, students in Further Education colleges, students in Higher Education Institutions and participants in Other Training within NI.

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Key Points

- The participation rate of all 16 to 19-year-olds in education and vocational training in 2022/23 is 79% (76% for males, 82% for females).
- The age with the highest participation rate is 16, having a participation rate of 95% in 2022/23 (92% for males, 97% for females).
- The age that the participation rate is lowest is at age 18, having a participation rate of 65% in 2022/23 (63% for males, 66% for females).
- Attending School is the most common method of participation in 2022/23 with 30,513 pupils (13,947 males, 16,566 females) representing a participation rate of 33%.

1. Participation Rates

1.1 Participation Rates by Age 2022/23

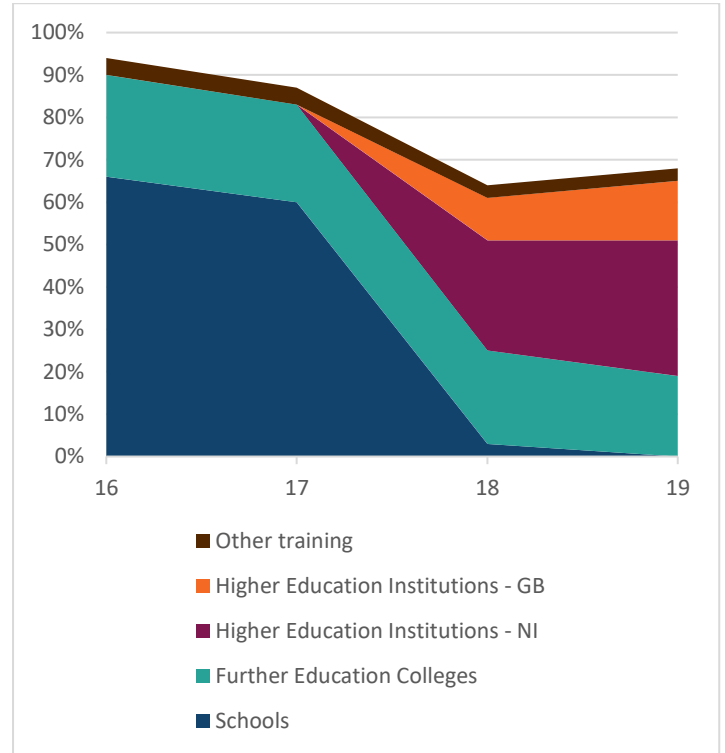
Attending School is the largest source of participation. This is concentrated in pupils aged 16 (66%) and 17 (60%).

After 17, the largest source of participation is attendance at Higher Education Institutions. The rate of people attending Higher Education Institutions is 36% at age 18 and 46% at age 19.

Participation in Further Education is consistently the second most common method of participation varying between 24% at age 16 and 19% at age 19.

Participation in Other Training remains consistent across all ages varying between 3 and 4% (Figure 1).

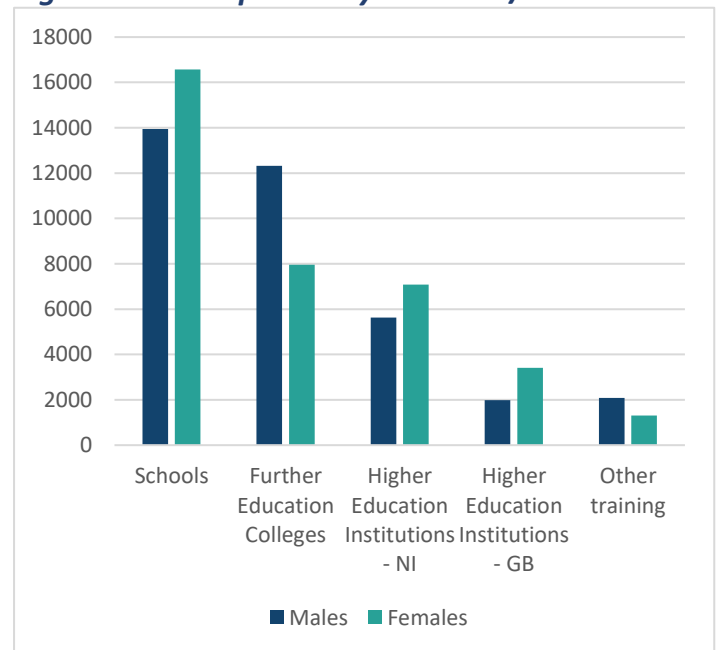
Figure 1. Participation Rates by Age 2022/23



1.2 Participation by Sex 2022/23

Females have a higher participation rate in Schools, and in Higher Education Institutions. Males have a higher participation rate in both Further Education Colleges and in Other Training (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Participation by Sex 2022/23



1.3 Participation Rates 2018/19 to 2022/23

Most sources of participation have had a stable participation rate between 2018/19 and 2022/23.

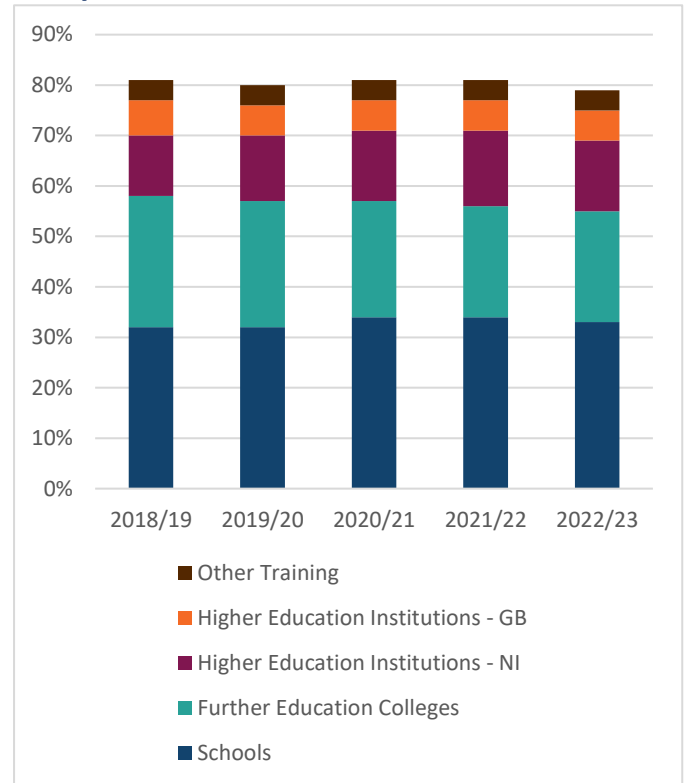
Schools have had a slight rise with the participation rate increasing from 32% in 2018/19 to 33% in 2022/23. Participation in Further Education Colleges fell in participation rate from 26% in 2018/19 to 22% in 2022/23.

Participation rate in Higher Education Institutions has risen slightly during the period. The total of all students in Higher Education Institutions has increased from 19% in 2018/19 to 21% in 2021/22, before decreasing to 20% in 2022/23. This is caused by an increase in students studying in NI (12% in 2018/19, 14% in 2022/23), offset against a decrease in students studying in GB (7% in 2018/19, 6% in 2022/23).

The participation rate for Other Training has risen from 3% in 2018/19 to 4% in 2022/23.

In total, the overall participation rate has fallen slightly, starting at 81% in 2018/19 and falling to 79% in 2022/23 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Participation Rates 2018/19 to 2022/23

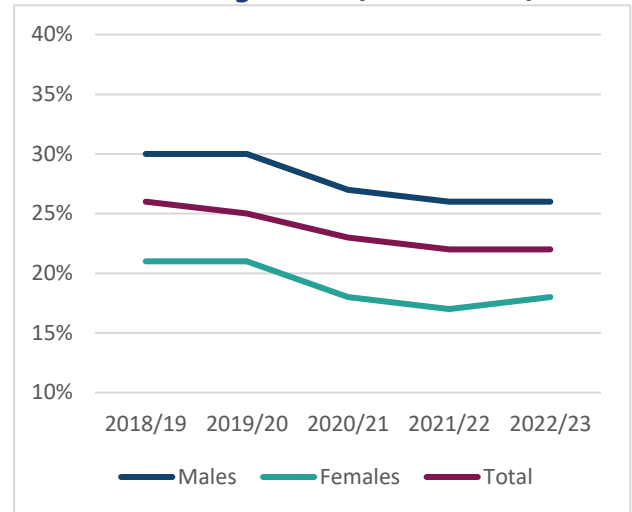


1.4 Participation Rate in Further Education Colleges

Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, the participation rate of students in Further Education Colleges has fallen by 4 percentage points (26% in 2018/19, 22% in 2022/23) (Figure 4).

A similar trend appears within both the male and female subgroups, with males having a 4 percentage point participation rate reduction during this period, and females having a 3 percentage point participation rate reduction.

Figure 4. Participation Rate in Further Education Colleges 2018/19 to 2022/23

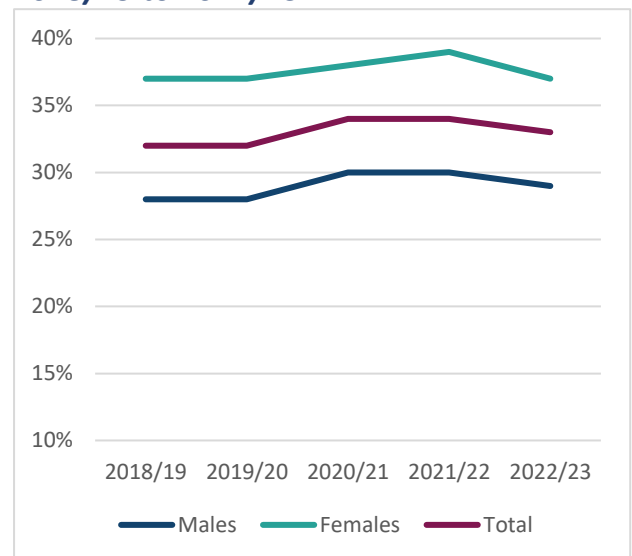


1.5 Participation Rate in Schools

Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, the participation rate of students in School has increased by 1 percentage point (32% in 2018/19, 33% in 2022/23) (Figure 5).

This trend also appears within the male subgroup, which also has increased by 1 percentage point from 28% in 2018/19 to 29% in 2022/23. The female participation rate has remained steady at 37% in both 2018/19 and 2022/23.

Figure 5. Participation Rate in Schools 2018/19 to 2022/23



1.6 Participation Rate in Higher Education Institutions

Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, the participation rate of students in Higher Education Institutions has increased by 1 percentage point (19% in 2018/19, 20% in 2022/23) (Figure 6).

Female participation increased by 1 percentage point between 2018/19 and 2022/23 while male participation was the same for both these years.

Figure 6. Participation Rate in Higher Education Institutions 2018/19 to 2022/23



2. Further Information

Further information on School enrolments is available at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/school-enrolments>

Further information on Further Education is available at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/further-education-college-statistics>

Further information on Higher Education is available at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-education-enrolments>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/higher-education-age-participation-index-northern-ireland-199899-202122>

Further information on Other Training is available at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/apprenticeshipsni-statistics>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/training-success-statistics>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/skills-life-and-work-statistics>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeship-activity>

Further information on Mid-Year Population Estimates is available at:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population/mid-year-population-estimates>

3. Footnotes

Revision

Data relating to the number of participants in Higher Education Institutions were revised in June 2026 for the years 2018/19 to 2022/23 so that age details of all participants are taken on the 1st July as opposed to the 31st August. The change in date allows participants to be counted at one point in time and provides more accurate participation rates.

Schools

Source: NI School Census.

Data are based on pupils enrolled on Census day i.e. The Friday of the first full week in October. (In 2022/23 this was 7th October 2022).

Age is as at 1st July of the previous academic year.

Data relating to independent schools in 2018/19 do not include boarders as an age breakdown was not available at this time.

Further Education Colleges

Source: Consolidated Data Return.

Age relates to the 1st July prior to the commencement of the academic year.

To prevent the identification of individuals, figures in the attached table are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, 2 rounded to 0.

Data include Higher Education participants studying in Further Education Colleges.

To avoid double counting of pupils/students, information relating to Entitlement Framework students (i.e. those whose attendance at a Further Education College is linked to their attendance at a school) have been excluded.

Higher Education Institutions

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Age relates to the 1st July prior to the commencement of the academic year. The 1st July date is a change to previous published data which were taken at the 31st August. The change in date

allows participants to be counted at one point in time and provides more accurate participation rates.

To prevent the identification of individuals, figures in the attached table are rounded to the nearest 5, with 0, 1, 2 rounded to 0. Due to rounding the total number of students in Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland and Higher Education Institutions in Great Britain may not sum to the total number of Higher Education students.

Only the Higher Education Institutions total is included in the participation percentage rate.

Data do not include the small number of Northern Ireland domiciled students studying Higher Education in the Republic of Ireland. Information on Northern Ireland domiciled students studying in Great Britain Further Education Colleges has also not been included.

Other training

Data include information on ApprenticeshipsNI, Training for Success, Skills for Life and Work; and Higher Level Apprenticeships from the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE).

Data for ApprenticeshipsNI, Training for Success and Skills for Life and Work are extracted from the Department's Client Management System (up to 2021/22) and the Department's Trainee and Apprentice Management System (from 2022/23 onwards).

Data from the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (CAFRE) include anyone enrolled in each respective year.

Age relates to the 1st July prior to the commencement of the academic year.

Data do not include training in Further Education Colleges.

Population

Source: 2023 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland.

Mid-year population estimates are taken on the 30th June, prior to the commencement of the academic year.