

Statistical Bulletin

Higher Level Apprenticeships (Level 4/5) in Northern Ireland: Academic years: 2017/18 – 2020/21



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This bulletin was revised on 1st March 2022 to correct the achievement and success rates in section 4 (Table 4.1, Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3, Figure 4.4). These include full achievement only, the previous published rates had included partial and full achievement.



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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Text
BMC	Belfast Metropolitan College
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
CDR	Consolidated Data Return
DfE	Department for the Economy
FE	Further Education
FE LMS	Further Education Learner Management System
HLA	Higher Level Apprenticeship
NI	Northern Ireland
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure
NRC	Northern Regional College
NWRC	North West Regional College
RRQ	Register of Regulated Qualifications
SERC	South Eastern Regional College
SRC	Southern Regional College
SSA	Sector Subject Area
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWC	South West College

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This official statistics release presents a range of analysis on the Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) level 4 and 5 programme in Northern Ireland. This covers provision across the academic years 2017/18 to 2020/21 and reports on HLAs delivered in Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). The statistics presented in this bulletin cover the characteristics of the participants enrolled on HLA courses and analysis of performance in terms of achievements.

KEY POINTS:

- In academic year 2020/21, there were 413 starts on an HLA programme. This was a decrease of 140 (25.3%) compared to 553 HLA starts recorded in 2019/20.
- A trend is emerging showing more males are entering HLA programmes than females. Approximately one in three starts in 2020/21 were female; 134 females compared to 279 males.
- In total there were 990 participants on HLA programmes in 2020/21; this included 413 starts, 462 in year 2 and 115 in year 3.
- In 2020/21, 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (36.6%) of all HLA participants.
- The overall success rate for final year individuals in 2020/21 was 91.1% (358 participants); an increase of 6.4 percentage points compared to 2019/20 (84.7%).

INTRODUCTION

Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision commenced in Northern Ireland in academic year 2017/18. Initially Level 4 and 5 HLA programmes were delivered across Further Education (FE) Colleges in Northern Ireland and in 2018/19 the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) commenced provision. The latest Statistical Bulletin provides key information on level 4 and 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship programmes and the participants for the academic years 2017/18 to 2020/21. A level 4 or 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship is equivalent to a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or a foundation degree.

The statistics presented in this bulletin cover a range of topics including starts, occupancy and achievement for participants on NI HLAs. This publication only reports on the provision of HLAs at level 4 and level 5 (Foundation degree or equivalent).

Higher Level Apprenticeships at level 6 and level 7 are offered at the Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland, this data is provided by the [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\)](#) and is reported in a separate Fact Sheet. The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme but will be a minimum of two years. The current frameworks can be accessed at [Types of Apprenticeships](#).

BACKGROUND

The scope of the HLA programme can be found in the policy publication '[Securing our Success - The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships](#)' (published June 2014). [Higher Level Apprenticeships \(HLAs\)](#) offer a spectrum of support from entry level up to level 8 (equivalent to a Doctorate), they facilitate lifelong learning and allow participants to move in and out of professional education and training at their own pace.

Several funding streams are available to FE colleges to deliver provision. These include direct funding from the Department for the Economy (DfE), through a mainstream mechanism or government training programmes, such as Training for Success. FE colleges can also receive funding from businesses/individuals, termed as cost recovery, or from other government departments, such as Department of Education (DE), through the Entitlement Framework programme. Most FE college provision includes courses that can potentially lead to a regulated qualification on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ); a smaller proportion are non-regulated; all HLA provision reported on in this publication are regulated courses.

A participant on an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a [core qualification](#). Where a participant has more than one enrolment their core qualification will be used for reporting purposes.

A list of key statistical publications can be found at the DfE [publication schedule](#), including those listed below:

[Further Education Statistics](#)

[ApprenticeshipsNI Statistics](#)

[Higher Education Statistics](#)

In relation to data from FE colleges, [Notes to Readers](#) provides further information on programme design and terminology used within the report. An associated [Background Quality Report](#) is also available.

This publication has been produced in accordance with the [Code of Practice](#) for Statistics, complying with the pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value and is published on an annual basis.

ADDITIONAL TABLES

Detailed additional and supplementary tables are available on the DfE web page: [Higher Level Apprenticeship in Northern Ireland - academic years 2017/18 to 2020/21](#).

1. ENROLMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS ON LEVEL 4/5 HLA PROGRAMMES

This section focuses on level 4 and 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision delivered in Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) colleges in the academic years 2017/18 - 2020/21. CAFRE HLA data are not included in section 1. All HLA programmes reported on in this publication are regulated courses.

PROPORTION OF HLA ENROLMENTS IN FE COLLEGES

In 2020/21, 20.9% (20,342) of all FE enrolments (97,532) were allocated to the 'Government Training' funding group, of which 977 (1.0% of all FE enrolments) were HLA enrolments (Table A1 and A2).

NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS AND INDIVIDUALS

An individual student engaged in an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification with potentially additional qualifications as part of their programme of study. Therefore, enrolment data will always be greater than or equal to the number of individuals participating in the programme.

The number of enrolments per individual is very close to one in all academic years (Table 1.1, Table A2).

Table 1.1: Enrolments and Participants on HLA programmes by academic year

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Enrolments	327	694	971	977
Participants	324	689	959	962
Enrolments per participant	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.02

Source: FE Learner Management System (LMS)

2. HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP STARTS - YEAR 1 OF HLA

A participant on an HLA programme may be enrolled in several courses, one of which will be a core qualification. Where a participant has more than one enrolment their core qualification will be used for reporting purposes. This section provides a summary of HLA starts and comparisons over academic years.

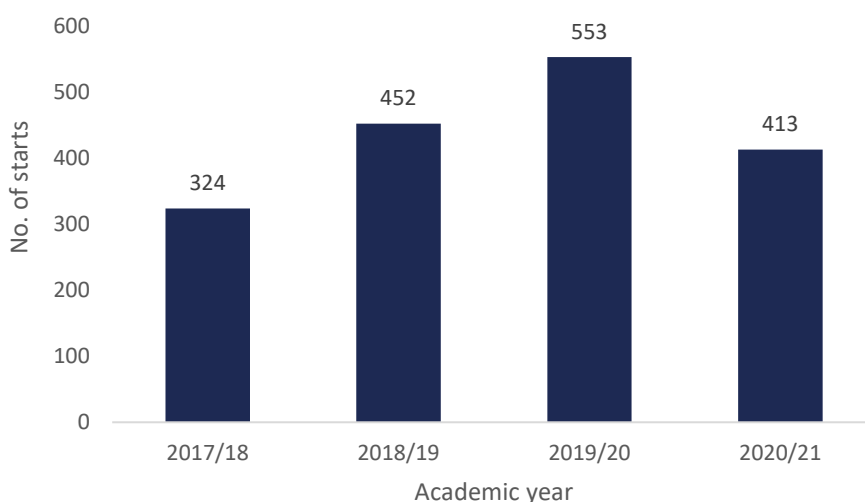
STARTS

FE colleges commenced delivering HLAs in 2017/18 and CAFRE in 2018/19.

In academic year 2020/21, there were 413 starts on an HLA programme. This was a decrease of 140 (25.3%) compared to 553 HLA starts recorded in 2019/20; this broke the trend of noticeable increases (Figure 2.1, Table B1).

The decrease in starts in 2020/21 may be attributed to the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 2.1: Number of HLA Starts, 2017/18 – 2020/21

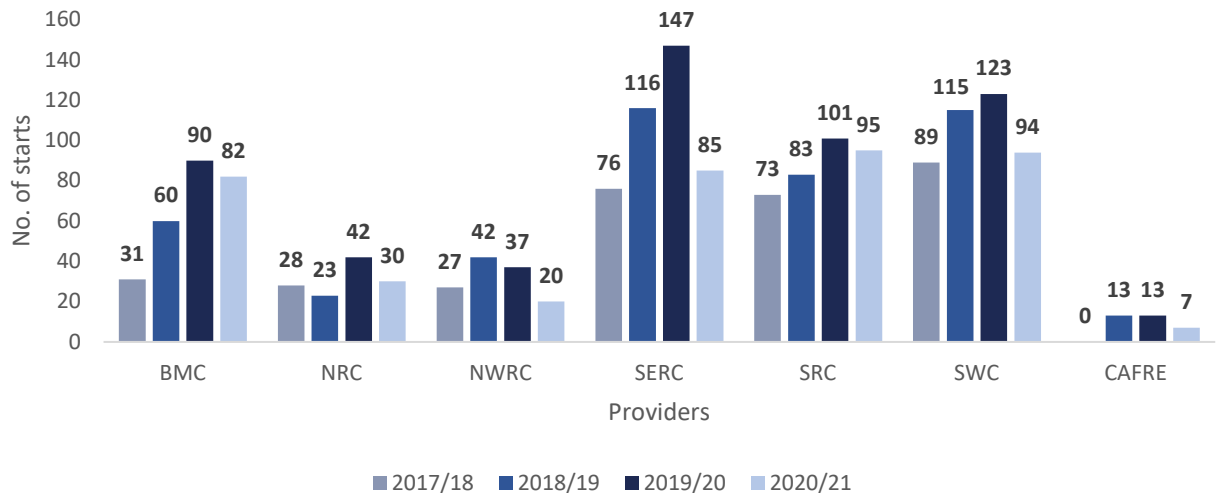


Source: FE Learner Management System (LMS), CAFRE administration system

WHERE IS HLA PROVISION BEING DELIVERED?

In 2020/21, all providers reported a decrease in the number of participants starting HLAs compared to 2019/20. Southern Regional College (SRC) had the largest proportion of HLA starts accounting for 23.0% (95), followed by South West College (SWC) 22.8% (94). CAFRE had the smallest proportion of HLA starts; accounting for 1.7% (7); (Figure 2.2, Table B1).

Figure 2.2: Number of HLA starts by provider, 2017/18 – 2020/21

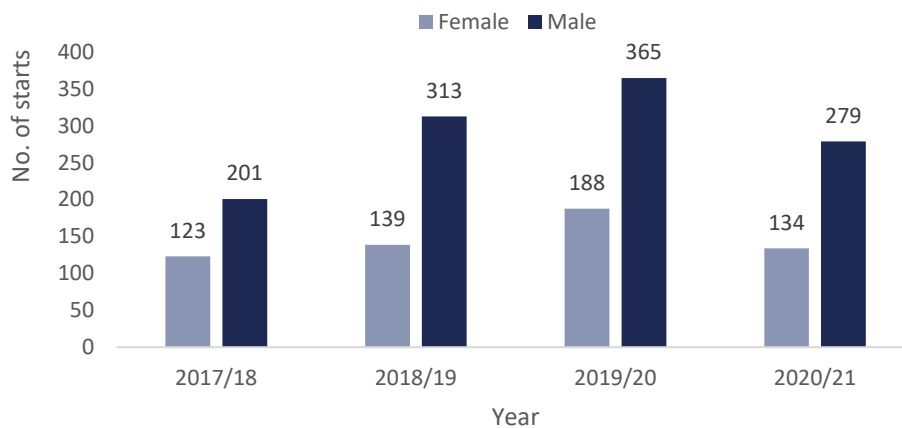


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

STARTS BY SEX

A trend is emerging showing more males are entering HLA programmes than females. Approximately one in three starts in 2020/21 were female; 134 females compared to 279 males. The number of male HLA starts is greater than females in all academic years (Figure 2.3, Table B2).

Figure 2.3: HLA starts by sex, 2017/18 – 2020/21

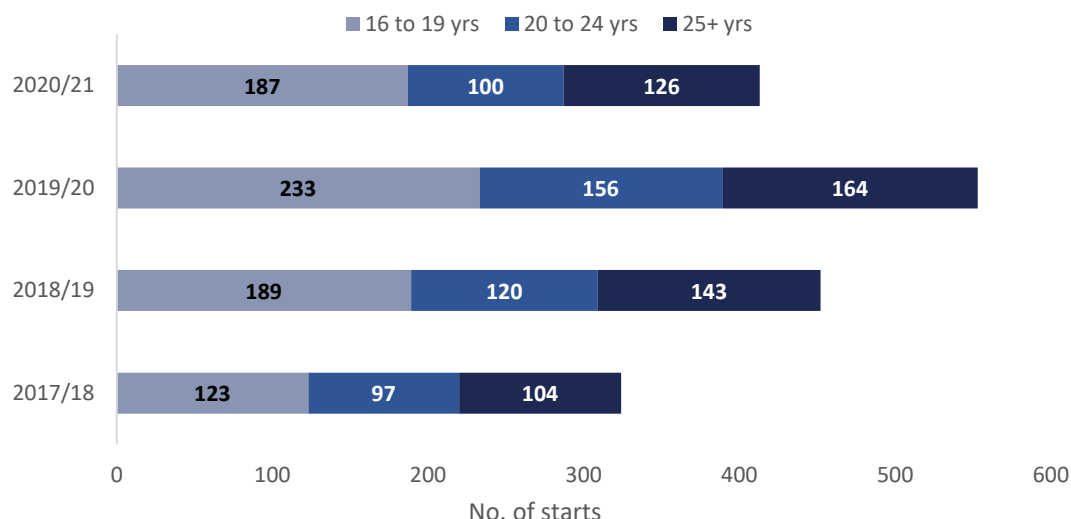


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

STARTS BY AGE

In 2020/21 the highest proportion (45.3%) of HLA starting participants were in the youngest age group, 16-19 year olds; 187 participants. The next highest proportion (30.5%) were those aged 25 and over; 126 participants. The age profile of HLA starts has been similar in proportion across the reported academic years (Figures 2.4, Table B3).

Figure 2.4: HLA Starts by age, 2017/18 – 2020/21

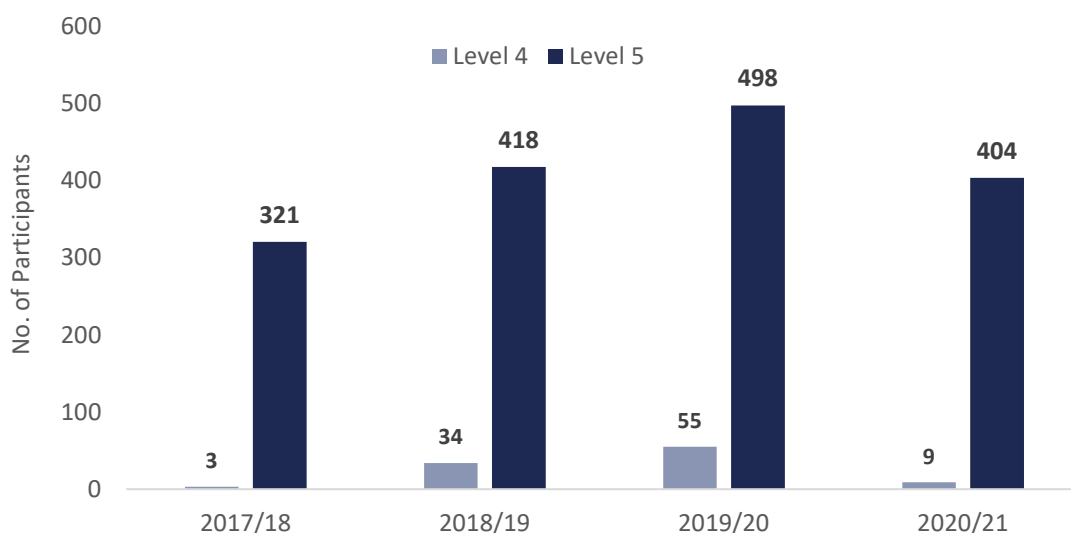


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

STARTS BY HLA LEVEL

Figure 2.5 shows the majority of starts commenced level 5 programmes in all academic years. In 2020/21, 97.8% (404) of starts began a level 5 HLA compared to 2.2% (9) starting a Level 4 HLA. There was a decrease (7.7 percentage points) in the proportion starting level 4 HLA programmes from 2019/20 to 2020/21 (Figure 2.5, Table B4).

Figure 2.5: HLA starts by level of programme, 2017/18 – 2020/21



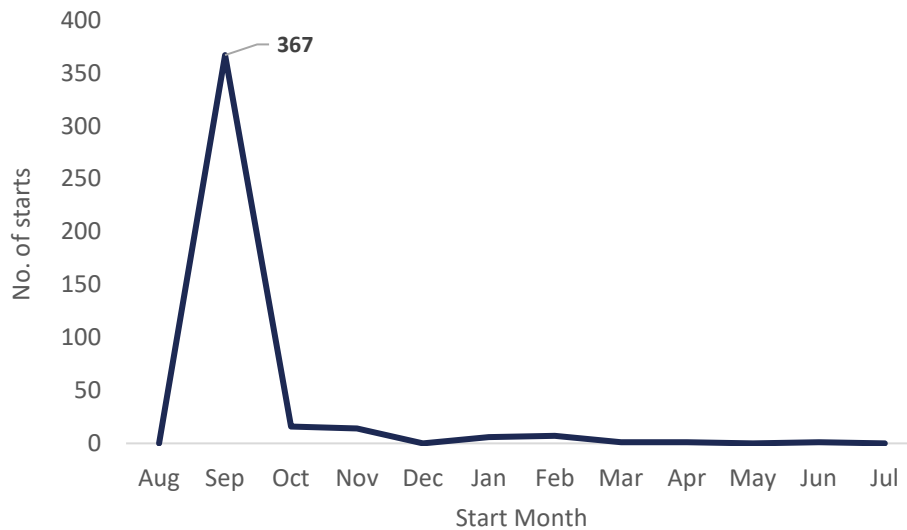
Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

START DATES

The start date is the date on which an enrolment begins. An academic year is defined by each provider and potentially will differ across all providers. An academic year traditionally starts in September and finishes in July the following year. The number of starts by month is calculated using the last Friday of each month.

As expected, the majority of start dates are at the beginning of the academic year, with most clustered around September. There was a peak of 367 HLA starts in September 2020 (Figure 2.6a & 2.6b, Table B5).

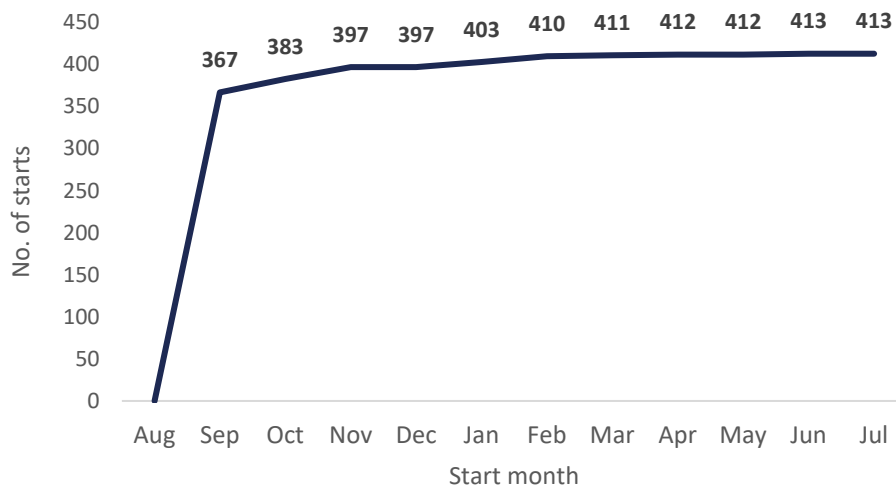
Figure 2.6a: Number of HLA starts by starting month, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration System

The majority of HLA participants started in September 2020 with the final count levelling off at 413.

Figure 2.6b: Cumulative total of HLA starts by starting month, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration System

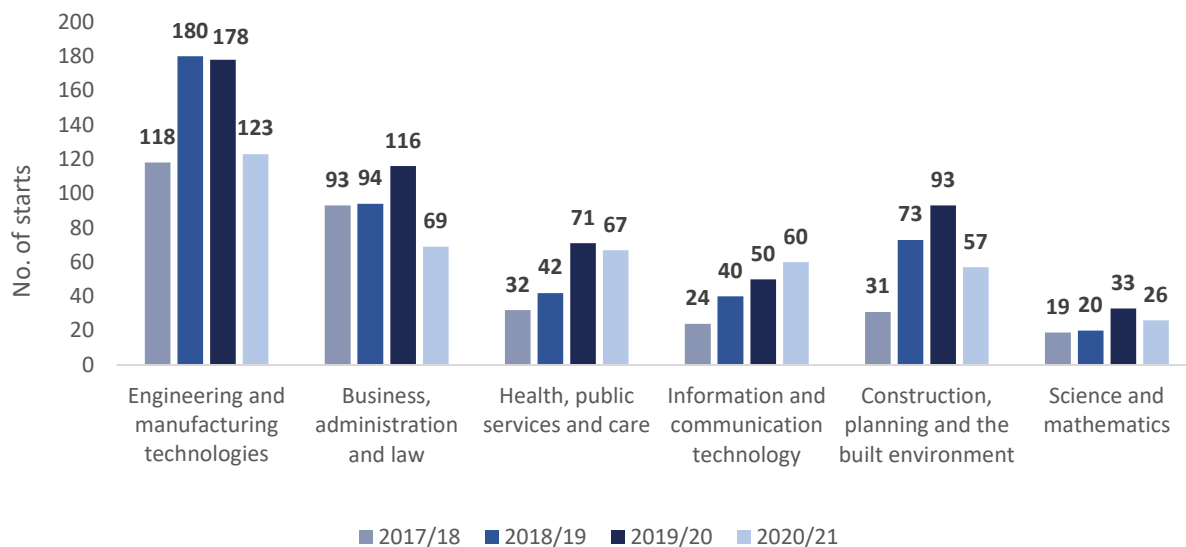
STARTS BY SUBJECT AREA

All regulated qualifications are assigned a [Sector Subject Area \(SSA\)](#) code by the Awarding Organisation, which indicates the high level topic of the course. Within this report, the term subject area is also used for sector subject area.

Figure 2.7 shows Information and communication technology was the only main subject sector area to record a year on year increase in HLA starts since the programme commenced in 2017/18.

Although 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' remained the most popular subject area for HLA starts, the proportion of starts on an 'Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies' HLA decreased from 32.2% in 2019/20 to 29.8% in 2020/21 (Figure 2.7, Table B6).

Figure 2.7: HLA starts by the six most popular sector subject areas, 2017/18 – 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

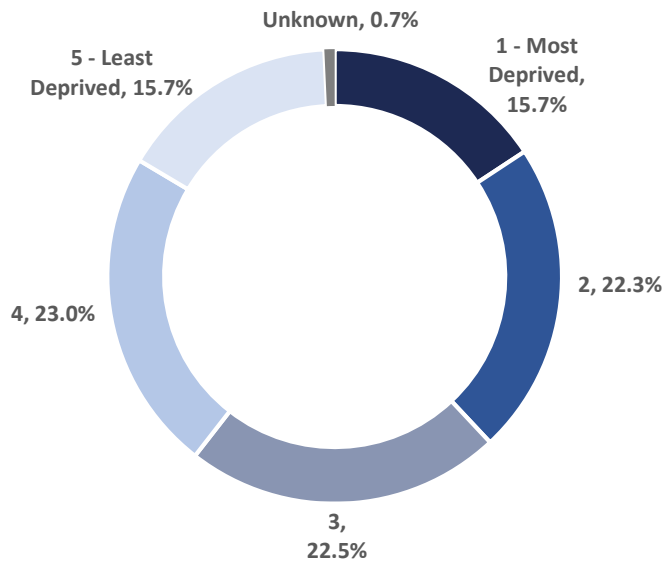
STARTS BY DEPRIVATION QUINTILE

Deprivation has been measured using the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM, 2017¹), which assesses the level of deprivation of Super Output Areas (SOAs) across NI from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890). For analysis purposes these areas are categorised into five geographical groups, termed 'quintiles', each accounting for 20% of the 890 SOAs. Quintile 1 is the most deprived group of areas and Quintile 5 is the least deprived group of areas. Any enrolments which have either a non-NI address or no NI postcode are classified as 'unknown'.

Those in the 'most deprived' and 'least deprived' quintiles recorded the lowest proportion (both 15.7%) of HLA starts in 2020/21 (Figure 2.8a & 2.8b, Table B7).

¹ Please note further information on Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 is available at: [NIMDM 2017](#)

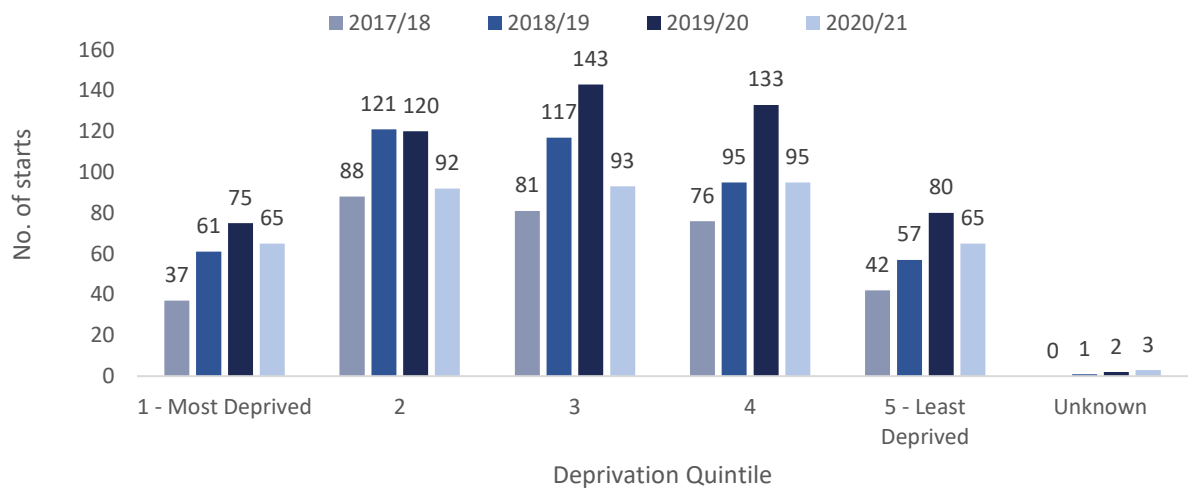
Figure 2.8a: Proportion of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

A similar pattern has emerged over the last four academic years. Figure 2.8b shows the number of HLA starts in the 'most deprived' and 'least deprived' quintiles were the lowest from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

Figure 2.8b: Number of HLA starts by Deprivation Quintile, 2017/18 – 2020/21



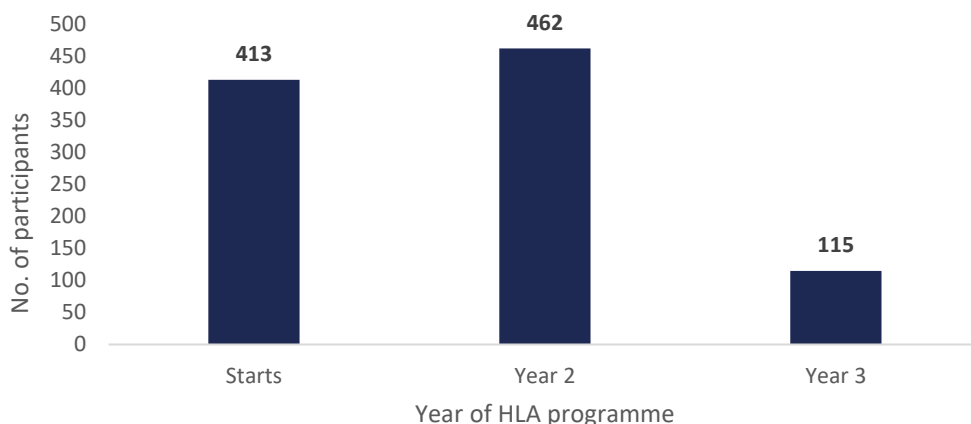
Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

3. PARTICIPANTS ON HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES (LEVEL 4/5), ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

This section reports on the total number of participants enrolled on HLA level 4 and 5 programmes in the academic year 2020/21, this includes participants in all years of their HLA programme. The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme, but will be a minimum of two years.

In total there were 990 participants on HLA programmes in 20/21; this included 413 starts, 462 in year 2 and 115 in year 3 (Figure 3.1, Table C1).

Figure 3.1: HLA participants by year of programme, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Almost seven in ten (69.0%) HLA participants were male in 2020/21; there were 307 females on an HLA programme compared to 683 males (Figure 3.2, Table C2). The age group of the participants on HLAs were evenly distributed. Approximately one third of participants fell into in each age category; 16 to 19 years – 325, 20 to 24 years – 339 and 25 and over – 326 (Figure 3.3, Table C3)

Figure 3.2: HLA participants by sex, 2020/21

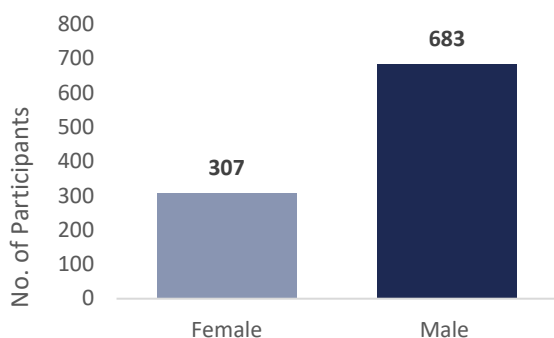
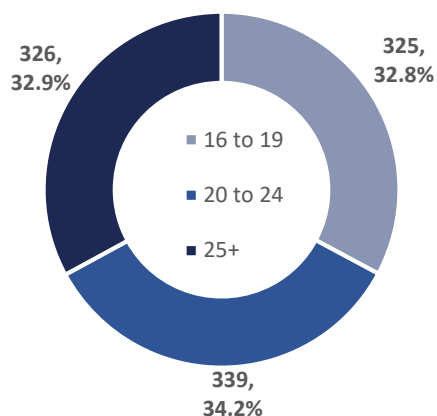


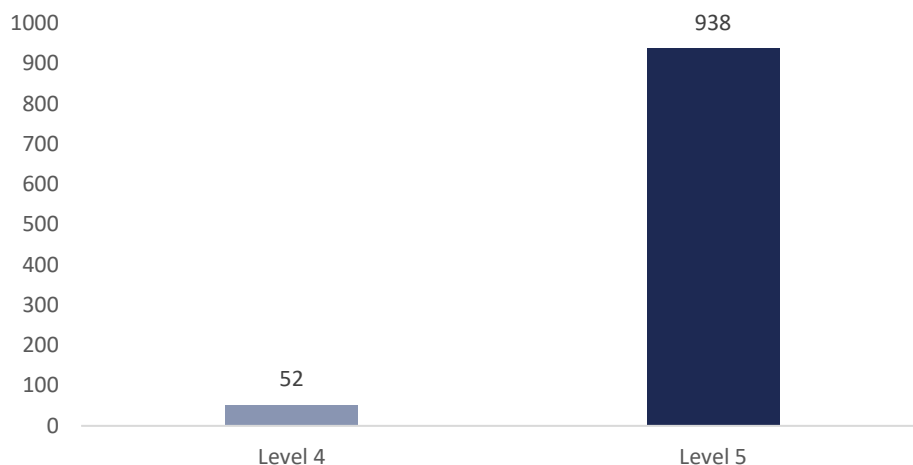
Figure 3.3: HLA participants by age group, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

In 2020/21, the majority (94.7%) of participants were studying a level 5 programme (Figure 3.4, Table C4).

Figure 3.4: HLA participants by level of programme, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

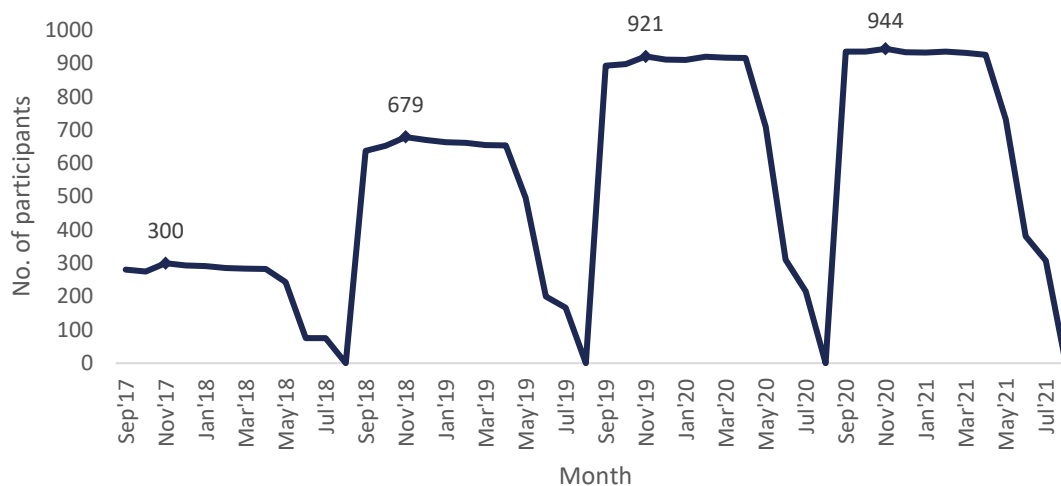
OCCUPANCY

The occupancy level of HLA programmes is the number of continuing/active participants at a particular point in time. The HLA programme began in 2017/18 and as HLAs are a minimum of two years, there is a cumulative effect for the number of participants on programme from 2018/19.

Figure 3.5 (Table C5) shows the total occupancy level on the last Friday of each month from 2017/18 to 2020/21. The number of participants filter off to zero in August as the academic year ends and then increase again in September as registration begins for the new academic year.

Figure 3.5 shows the total number of participants on HLA programmes peaks in November 2020, recording 944 participants.

Figure 3.5: Occupancy of HLA participants, 2017/18 – 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

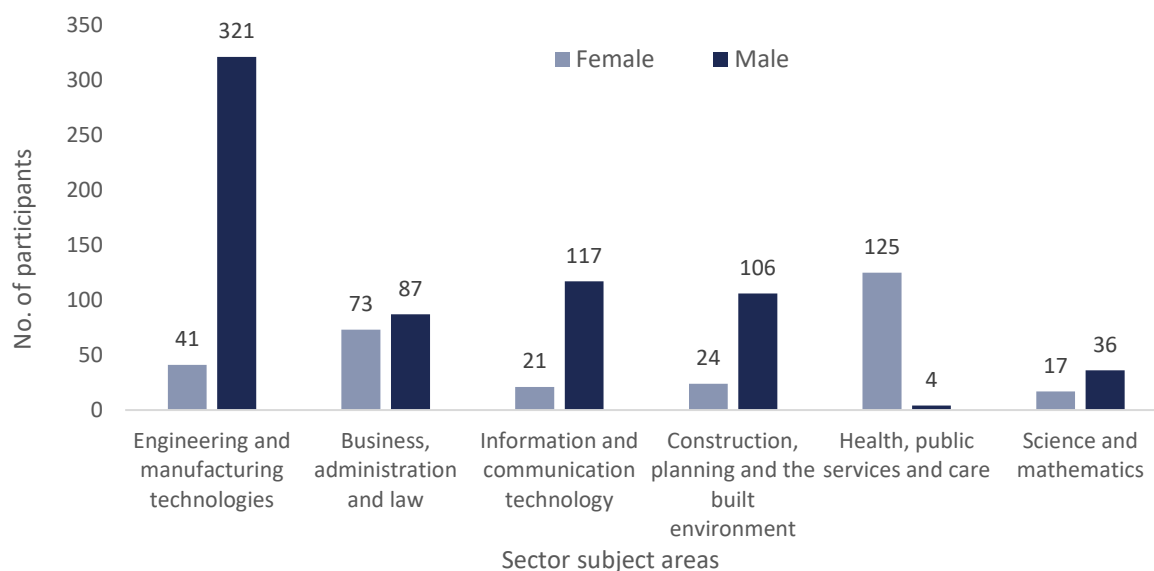
SECTOR SUBJECT AREA

Figure 3.6 shows the sex breakdown for each HLA sector subject area. Although overall there are more male participants on HLAs; it highlights the difference in HLA subject area choices between males and females.

In 2020/21, 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' was the most popular subject area, accounting for over one third (36.6%) of all HLA participants. This subject area recorded a notable difference across sex; 13.4% (41) of female HLA participants were studying in this area compared to 47.0% (321) of males.

The second most popular subject area was 'Business, administration and law' (16.2%). This area was more popular with females; 23.8% of female HLA participants were studying an HLA in this area compared to 12.7% of males. Figure 3.6 shows HLAs in 'Information and Communication Technology' were male dominated and HLAs in 'Health, public services and care' were female dominated (Figure 3.6, Table C6).

Figure 3.6: HLA participants by Sector subject area and sex, 2020/21

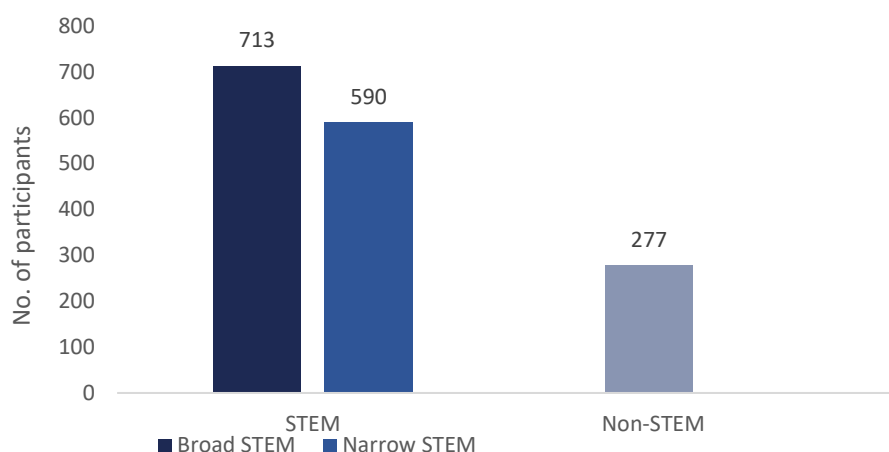


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS (STEM)

In 2020/21, over seven in ten (72.0%) participants were studying HLA programmes in broad STEM areas, 713 participants. This reduced to 590 (59.6%) for narrow STEM and there were 277 (28.0%) participants studying an HLA in a non-STEM related area (Figure 3.7, Table C7).

Figure 3.7: HLA participants by STEM indicator, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system
 Note: Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

HLAs BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT (LGD)

In 2020/21, the Local Government District (LGD) Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon recorded the highest (173) number of participants on an HLA and Antrim and Newtownabbey the lowest (38). Comparing the numbers against the economically active population (those aged 16-64 years) using mid year population estimates, Table 3.1 shows Mid Ulster recorded the highest rate per 100,000 population (161.7) and Belfast had the lowest (42.1); (Figure 3.8, Table 3.1 and Table C8).

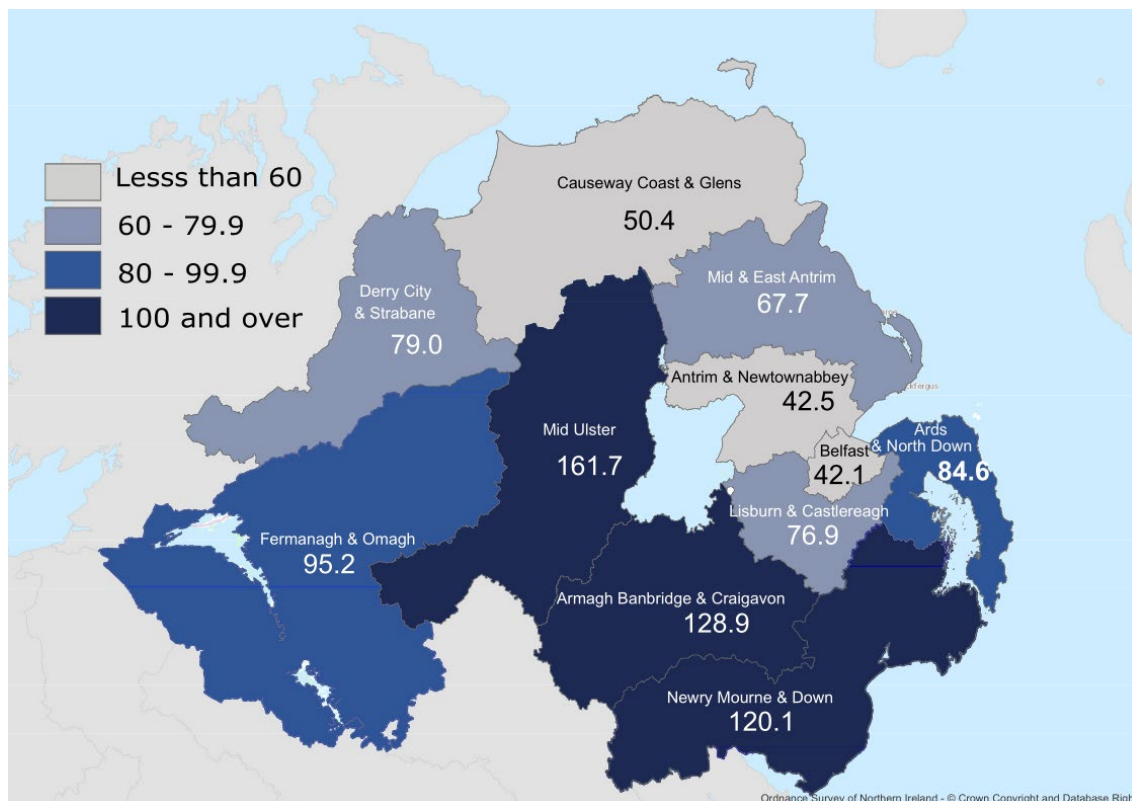
Table 3.1: HLA participants by LGD and Rate per 100,000 population aged 16-64 years, 2020/21

Local Government Districts (LGD 2014)	No. of participants on HLAs	Mid Year population estimates, 2020	Rate per 100,000 population aged 16-64 years
Antrim and Newtownabbey	38	89,397	42.5
Ards and North Down	82	96,960	84.6
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	173	134,193	128.9
Belfast	94	223,119	42.1
Causeway Coast and Glens	45	89,247	50.4
Derry City and Strabane	75	94,943	79.0
Fermanagh and Omagh	68	71,420	95.2
Lisburn and Castlereagh	70	91,040	76.9
Mid and East Antrim	58	85,692	67.7
Mid Ulster	149	92,161	161.7
Newry, Mourne and Down	134	111,573	120.1
Unknown	4	-	-
Total	990	1,179,745	83.9

Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system
[NISRA Mid Year Population Estimates](#)

Figure 3.8 shows in 2020/21 Mid Ulster had the highest (161.7) proportion of HLA participants per 100,000 population while Belfast (42.1) had the lowest.

Figure 3.8: HLA participants per 100,000 population (16-64 year olds) by LGD, 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system
 NISRA Mid Year Population Estimates

4. REVISED HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP PERFORMANCE

Section 4 of this bulletin was revised on 1st March 2022 to correct the achievement and success rates (Table 4.1, Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3, Figure 4.4).

A student can enrol on a course that is multiple years in length, but will typically only have the opportunity to obtain the qualification in final year of the course. This section focuses on final year participants only. It will explore the performance (retention, achievement and success) of final year HLA participants in academic year 2020/21.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Gaining a qualification includes only those with full achievement. Partial achievements are not included in this analysis.

In academic year 2020/21, 393 HLA participants entered final year; 380 completed final year and 358 gained their final year qualification.

Retention Rate

Retention rate is defined as the percentage of final year HLA participants who completed the HLA programme.

The overall retention rate for final year participants in 2020/21 was 96.7% (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

Achievement Rate

Achievement rate relates to the percentage of final year completed HLA participants who achieve an HLA qualification.

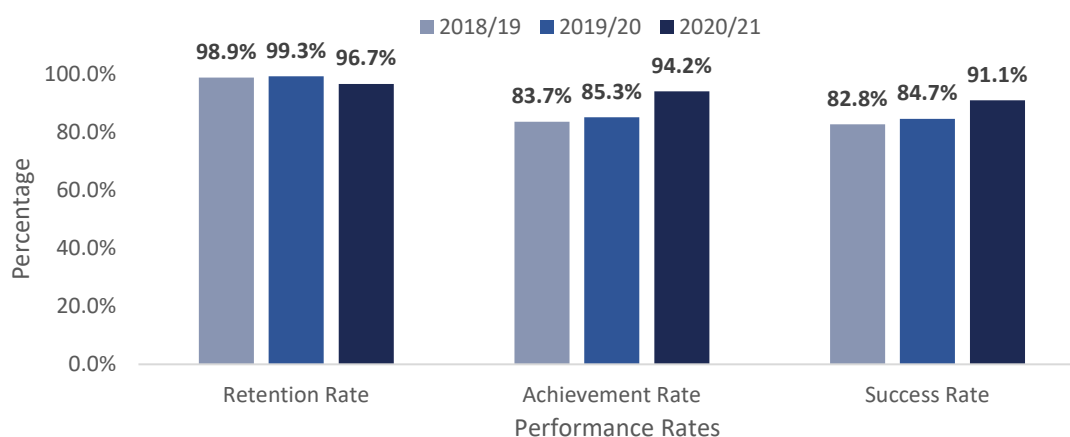
The overall achievement rate for final year individuals in 2020/21 was 94.2%. This was an increase of 8.9 percentage points compared to 2019/20 (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

Success Rate

Success rate is recognised as the overall measure of performance, which is the percentage of final year participants on the HLA programme who complete and achieve a qualification.

The overall success rate for final year individuals in 2020/21 was 91.1% (358 participants). This was an increase of 6.4 percentage points compared to 2019/20 (Figure 4.1, Table 4.1 and Table D1).

Figure 4.1: Performance of HLA participants, academic years 2018/19, 2019/20 & 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

Table 4.1 : Performance of final year HLA participants, academic years 2018/19 – 2020/21

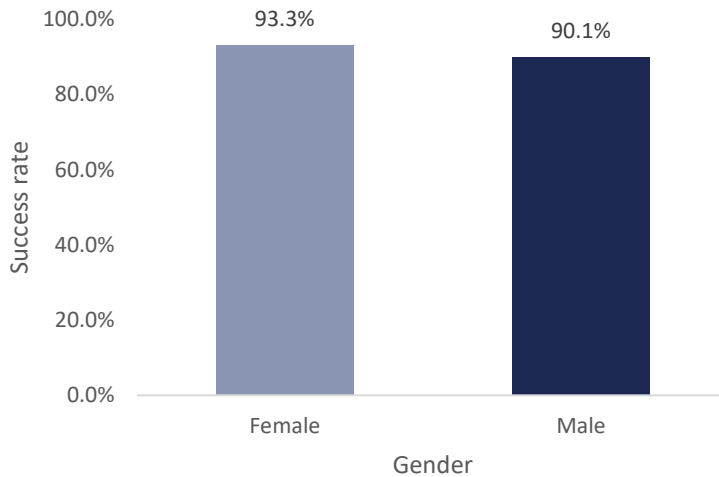
Year	Final Year Enrolment	Final Year Completer	Retention Rate	Final Year Achievement	Achievement rate	Success Rate
2020/21	393	380	96.7%	358	94.2%	91.1%
2019/20	301	299	99.3%	255	85.3%	84.7%
2018/19	180	178	98.9%	149	83.7%	82.8%

Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

SUCCESS RATE BY SEX

The success rate for females was slightly higher than males, 93.3% of females in their final year gained their HLA qualification compared to 90.1% males (Figure 4.2, Table D2).

Figure 4.2: HLA participant success rate by sex, academic year 2020/21

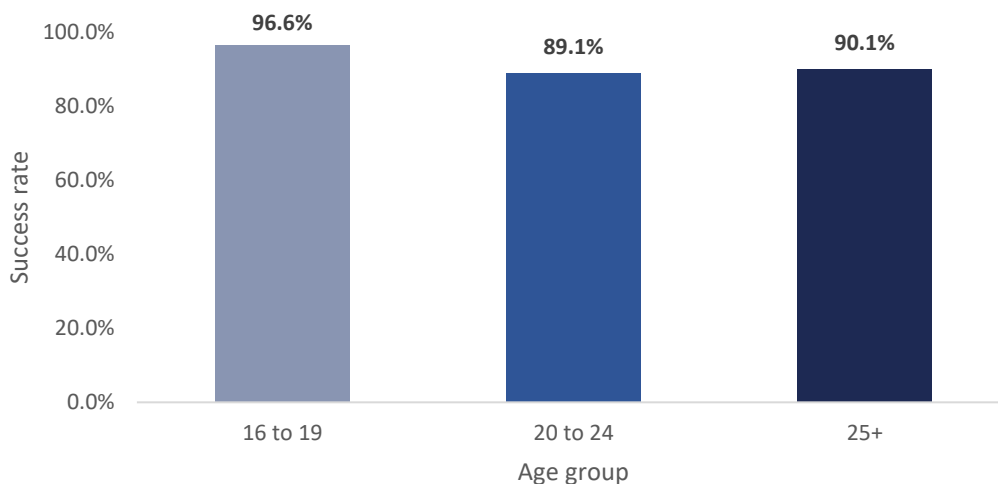


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

SUCCESS RATE BY AGE

Those aged 16-19 years reported the highest success rate, 96.6%, followed by the 25 and over age group, 90.1% and the 20-24 age group reported the lowest rate at 89.1% (Figure 4.3, Table D3).

Figure 4.3: HLA participant success rate by age group, academic year 2020/21

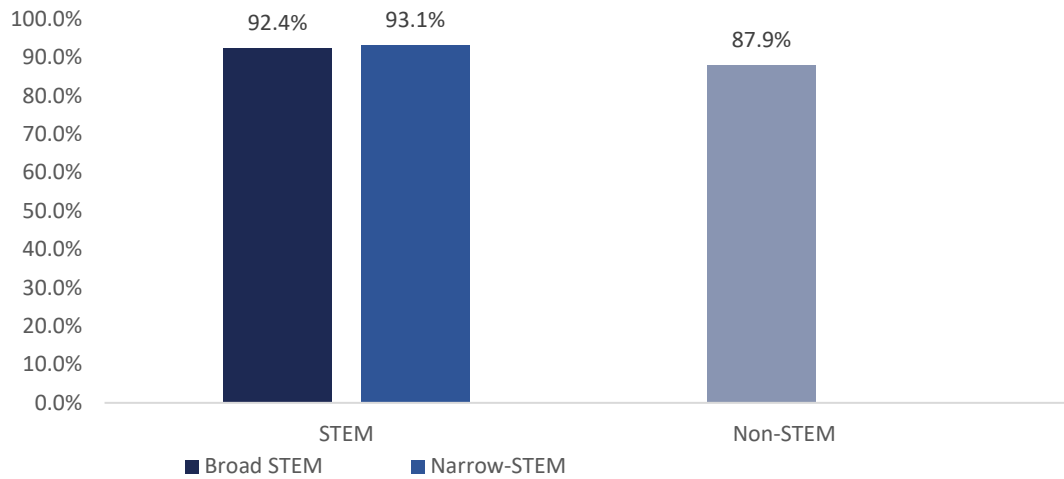


Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

SUCCESS BY STEM INDICATOR

The success rate was higher in Broad STEM (92.4%) and Narrow STEM (93.1%) areas compared to Non-STEM areas (87.9%); (Figure 4.4, Table D4).

Figure 4.4: HLA participant success rate by STEM indicator, academic year 2020/21



Source: FE LMS, CAFRE administration system

Note: Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM

ANNEX A: NOTES TO READERS

SOURCE OF DATA

The information presented in this bulletin is derived from the statistical returns listed below:

1. The FE colleges submit an electronic data return from the live FE Learner Management system (FE LMS) called the Consolidated Data return (CDR). The CDR came into operation for the 2013/14 academic year and is used for analysis related to the year 2017/18 and 2018/19. Each of the data returns are computerised data files consisting of individual records for each enrolment recorded by FE colleges during each academic year. Data is validated before the files are distributed to DfE. Data is sourced from Northern Ireland's six FE colleges; they operate across over 40 campuses and through over 400 outreach community locations. The six FE colleges are:

- Belfast Metropolitan College – BMC
- Northern Regional College – NRC
- North West Regional College - NWRC
- South Eastern Regional College - SERC
- Southern Regional College – SRC
- South West College - SWC

Please refer to [DfE's role in further education](#) for further detail about FE colleges in Northern Ireland.

2. CAFRE data return – this is an extract of data provided directly from the CAFRE administrative database. Numbers are relatively small and data can be validated with CAFRE administrators.

REVISIONS

Over time as more information becomes available, it is possible figures may be revised to improve quality and accuracy. Users will be informed of any revisions to the data.

2018/19 revision

The method for counting occupancy has been revised from 2017/18 therefore there are some small differences in the data reported in the 2017/18 bulletin and the 2018/19 bulletin. The data published in 2017/18 included only those HLA participants that were continuing at October 2018. This has been revised to include starts as they join the HLA programme and exclude participants only as they exit the HLA programme.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Year

An academic year period is defined by each provider and potentially will differ across all providers. An academic year traditionally starts in August and finishes in July the following year.

Age

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

Core Qualification

The core qualification is the qualification undertaken by the learner that is classed as the main component of their programme of study. The list of core qualifications undertaken in each academic year is presented in the table below.

Core Qualification Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Accounting Technicians Ireland Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Cyber Security and Networking Infrastructure		✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Business Management			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Civil Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Cloud and Application Development		✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Computing (Software Development)		✓		
Foundation Degree in Digital Marketing, Advertising & Communications			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Energy Environment and Sustainability			✓	
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Manufacturing (2 years)			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Manufacturing (3 years)			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Mechatronics (2 years)			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering – Mechatronics (3 years)			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering (Manufacturing Engineering)	✓	✓		✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering (Mechatronics)	✓	✓		✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Architectural Engineering and Energy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Engineering in Mechatronic Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Food and Drink Manufacture		✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Chemical Sciences)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Core Qualification Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Life Sciences)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Computing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Computing Infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	
Foundation Degree in Science in Construction Engineering with Surveying	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Hospitality & Tourism Management with Specialisms			✓	✓
Foundation Degree in Science in International Hospitality & Tourism Management	✓	✓		✓
Foundation Degree in Science in Software Development	✓	✓	✓	✓
IMI Level 4 Certificate in Advanced Automotive Studies		✓	✓	
IMI Level 5 Diploma in Automotive Management (VRQ)	✓	✓	✓	✓
LCL Level 4 Certificate in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing	✓	✓		
Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development (Management) (Wales and Northern Ireland)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Construction and the Built Environment		✓	✓	✓
Pearson Edexcel Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Adults' Management) Wales and Northern Ireland		✓	✓	
NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care Services (Northern Ireland)				✓

Data Sources

The information presented in this statistical bulletin has been derived from Consolidated Data return (CDR) provided by FE Colleges from the live LMS and the College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) administration system.

Enrolments

The FE enrolment figures are simply a count of the number of enrolment records within the FE data return.

Final year

A student can enrol on a course that is multiple years in length, but those in their last year are regarded as 'final year', for example participants on a one year course or the second year of a two year course.

Final year completers

Those in their final year of a course and who do not withdraw from their course are regarded as final year completers.

Final year achievements

Those in their final year of a course who have completed the course and subsequently achieved are regarded as final year achievements.

Funding streams

Enrolments delivered through FE colleges can be funded through several funding streams. Enrolments funded by the HLA programme within FE Colleges in Northern Ireland are classified as 'Government Training' within the funding group. For further information [see Section 1.3 within FE Activity publication](#).

Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) programme

The purpose of the HLA programme is to increase skills levels and raise employer productivity. They provide a high quality parallel route to the traditional academic pathway, focused on the skills needed by the local economy, with opportunities for the apprentice to work towards an internationally recognised qualification.

Level

If the FE college enrolment is level 3 or below and is regulated, then the level is derived from the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ). If the enrolment is not part of the RRQ, the level is based on the information entered against the enrolment by the FE College. Each regulated qualification has a level between entry level and level 8. Further information can be accessed at [what qualification levels mean](#).

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Quintile 2017

The analysis presented in the supplementary tables utilises five groups or quintiles of super output areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. These five groups are determined based on level of relative deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

The [NISRA website](#) provides further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland.

Occupancy

The volume of FE college enrolments which are actively continuing on their course at a particular point in the academic year.

Qualifications

Qualifications are counted for those final year enrolments in regulated courses at FE Colleges. A student can either fully or partially achieve as well as fail their qualification.

Performance Rates

Retention rate is defined as the percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students. Those who complete their course early (and recorded in the data as a withdrawal) and who have subsequently achieved their programme of study qualification have been regarded as a 'completer'.

Achievement rate relates to the percentage of final year regulated enrolments completed by students who achieve a qualification.

Success rate is recognised as the overall measure of performance, which is the percentage of final year regulated enrolments of students who complete and achieve a qualification.

Programme of Study

The programme of study is the individual or group of qualifications from the approved curriculum for the HLA. This includes, as a minimum, the most relevant vocational qualification at level 4 or higher (core qualification), additional qualifications requested by employers.

Regulated enrolments

Regulated qualifications are those that are reviewed, recognised and monitored by the regulatory bodies in order to make sure that they meet specific criteria and quality standards. Traditionally, 'Regulated enrolments' are regarded as enrolments on:

- qualifications at 'level 3 or below' which appear on the [Register of Regulated Qualifications \(RRQ\)](#) or part of the Department's Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications (PLAQ/Access list), and;
- Higher Education qualifications (at 'level 4 or above') includes Vocational Qualifications Levels 4 to 8.

Rounding

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

Sector Subject Area

For regulated provision delivered in the FE sector, the [Sector Subject Area \(SSA\)](#) code is derived from the official OFQUAL Register of Regulated Qualifications based on the qualification or unit code.

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

STEM provision is identified by the subject code entered by the FE College. If the subject code starts with a letter between A and K (Medicine, Dentistry and Allied Subjects; Biological and Physical Sciences; Agriculture; Mathematics and IT; Engineering and Technology; Architecture, Building and Planning) then it is regarded as 'Broad' STEM. 'Narrow' STEM is those enrolment records with a subject code starting with a letter C, F, G, H or J (Biological and Physical Sciences; Mathematics and IT; Engineering and Technology).

Section 75 categories

Equality related data, such as community background, disability and ethnicity, are self-reported by the student during the data capture process within FE colleges. This information is available within the supplementary tables S1 to S6.

Dependant counts are based on individual questions, which is self-reported by the student, if they have any dependants which are adults, children or a person with a disability (Table S2).

Disability is determined by the response to the question '*Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?*' (Table S3).

FURTHER ENQUIRIES

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

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This statistical bulletin and other statistical bulletins published by Youth Training Statistics and Research Branch are available to download free from the internet at:

[Higher and further education training statistics](#)