



Annual Monitoring Report 2020 / 2021



1.0 Introduction

This report highlights the main findings given in response to the National Youth Agency (NYA) Annual Monitoring survey which Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are required to complete as a part of their Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) validation process.

The data collected supports the Education and Training Standards Committee to develop strategy and is also used by the NYA in its ongoing work around workforce development and can support HEIs in the development of their own Youth Work courses. This report forms a summary of the main data collected.

In 2020/21 there were **20 HEIs** offering **28 programmes**.

Due to staff sickness and programme delivery, we received returns from **18 HEIs, offering 26 programmes**, of which full data on **25 programmes** were completed.

2.0 Methodology

The quantitative data may have some minor inconsistencies as figures are recorded on a per 'academic year' basis. However, some courses receive both January and September intakes, course lengths differ between distance learning and traditional 'in-house' courses as well across part-time and full-time courses, and some students undertake resits or defer their completion.

Where these inconsistencies are known they are indicated.

3.0 Executive Summary

Reported undergraduate student numbers are down in this year, continuing a trend over the past decade. However, it is likely that actual numbers are up, as two undergraduate courses did not provide student numbers.

We expect a confirmed increase of undergraduate student numbers in the next year based on:

- 100% completion rate of data from existing courses
- One new course with a January intake having a full year to report on
- A further FOUR new courses having started in this reporting period.

We are similarly short of data from one postgraduate course due to Covid-19, but reported postgraduate student numbers are up on the previous year.

We expect postgraduate student numbers to continue this increase as:

- There has been a consistent trend of a greater proportion of undergraduates continuing further studies.
- A further TWO new postgraduate courses have started in this reporting period.

Overall, the number of staff per course has continued to increase, with:

- Stable numbers of JNC-qualified lecturers employed per course
- An increase in the number of non-JNC staff per course, especially full-time staff.

HEIs continue to provide JNC-qualified support to students in placements where possible and especially reported the benefits of using alumni for this role. In instances where there is no direct JNC-qualified supervision available within the placement, HEIs report strong processes to ensure any non-JNC-qualified supervision is bolstered with training for supervisors, and the provision of regular check-ins with university staff who are JNC-qualified.

The demographics of student intakes continues to show several trends:

- The percentage of students of colour has increased to 46%, the highest proportion on record and continuing an overall trend in the past 5 years.
- The percentage of students with a reported disability remains consistent, being between 17% to 23% of students in the past 5 years.
- The previously reported growing gap in recruitment between males and females has increased further, with males accounting for 18% of undergraduate students and 17% of postgraduate students in this year – the lowest proportion on record for each. It should be noted that in this survey we only gave the option male or female, in future surveys this question will be amended.
- Students aged 21 to 29 continue to account for a greater proportion of all students. This year was the first that they had the greatest proportions at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Correspondingly, fewer undergraduate students appear to be entering courses directly from school, and thus the proportion of undergraduate students with an A-Level has decreased further, from 59% in 2017/18 to 45% in 2020/21.

In the past two years, completion rates for full-time students stabilised at level 4 and level 5, but continued to decline slightly at Level 6. HEIs reported that this is predominantly due to Covid-19 related circumstances affecting that year's cohort most specifically.

Where graduate destinations are known, unemployment rates are near 0% - suggesting that students with a JNC validated degree are able to secure employment following graduation. HESA collect graduate destination data, but this is done 15 months after a student finishes their studies and is only collected from those graduates who complete the survey.

4.0 Recommendations

- Annual monitoring form and method of data collection to be reviewed.
- It is hoped the introduction of a Youth Worker register will support the creation of a network of qualified placement supervisors. There is also the potential for the register to give further information on graduate destinations.
- Continue work, through ETS, with the Regional Youth Work Units to explore opportunities for new HEI delivery of programmes, including the Level 6 Integrated Degree Apprenticeship. An emphasis will be on geographical areas not currently offering programmes.

5.0 Analysis of Data:

The following reporting only takes account of received data to ensure accurate reporting and does not estimate returns from incomplete or missing returns.

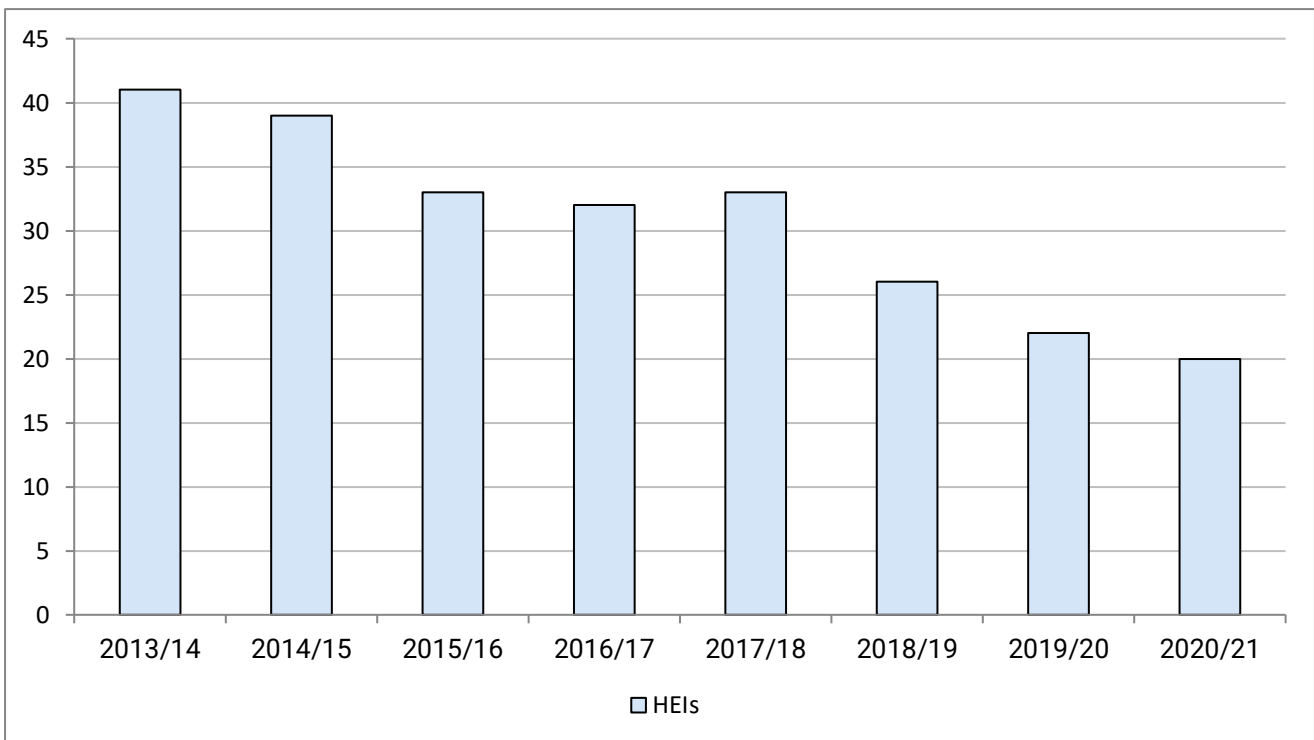
The quantitative data may have some minor inconsistencies as figures are recorded on a per 'academic year' basis. However, some courses receive both January and September intakes, course lengths differ between distance learning and traditional 'in-house' courses as well across part-time and full-time courses, and some students undertake resits or defer their completion. Where these inconsistencies are known they are indicated.

Whilst every attempt is made to check the consistency of data provided, we cannot account for incorrect data entry in returns.

5.0.1 HEIs and Programmes - High level overview of programmes:

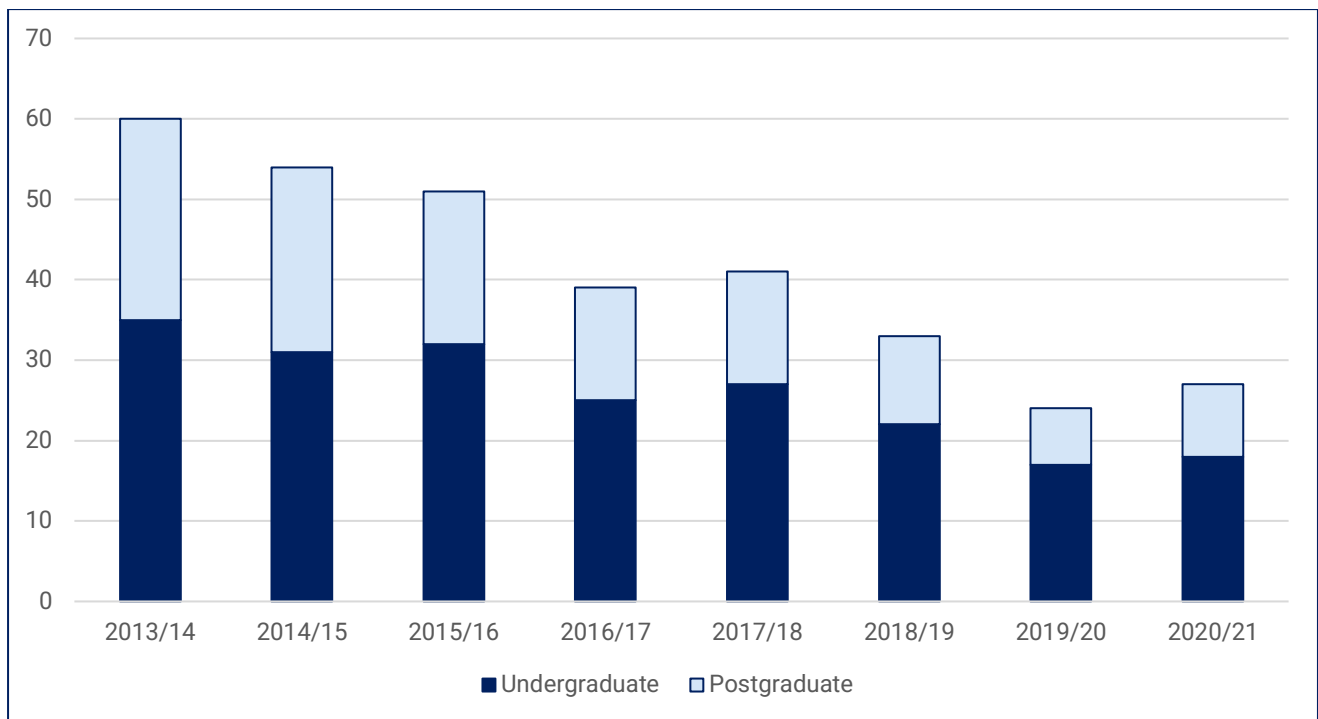
Due to the steady decline in HEIs offering programmes, the reported number of HEIs returning data in this year is at its lowest, but it is anticipated this decline has bottomed out and from 2021/22 will start to increase.

FIGURE 1: Total Number of HEIs Returning Data



However, the number of courses returning data across those HEIs has increased from last year, notwithstanding two undergraduate courses not providing any and thus not being reported on.

FIGURE 2: Total Number of Courses Returning Data



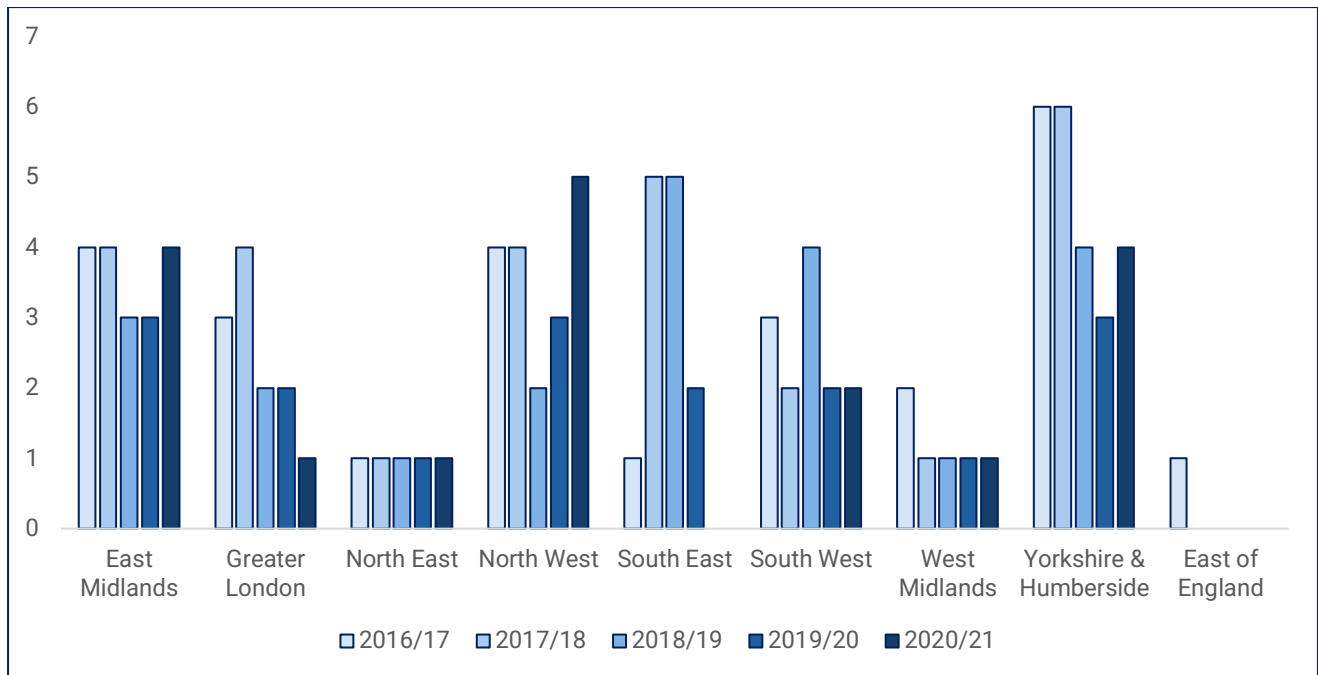
Most notable is that there has been no undergraduate course in the East of England since 2016/17. All other regions continue to have at least one undergraduate course available.

Each region in England has at least one undergraduate course available, with the exception of the East of England



Five regions offered postgraduate courses in this past year, up from four in 2019 / 20

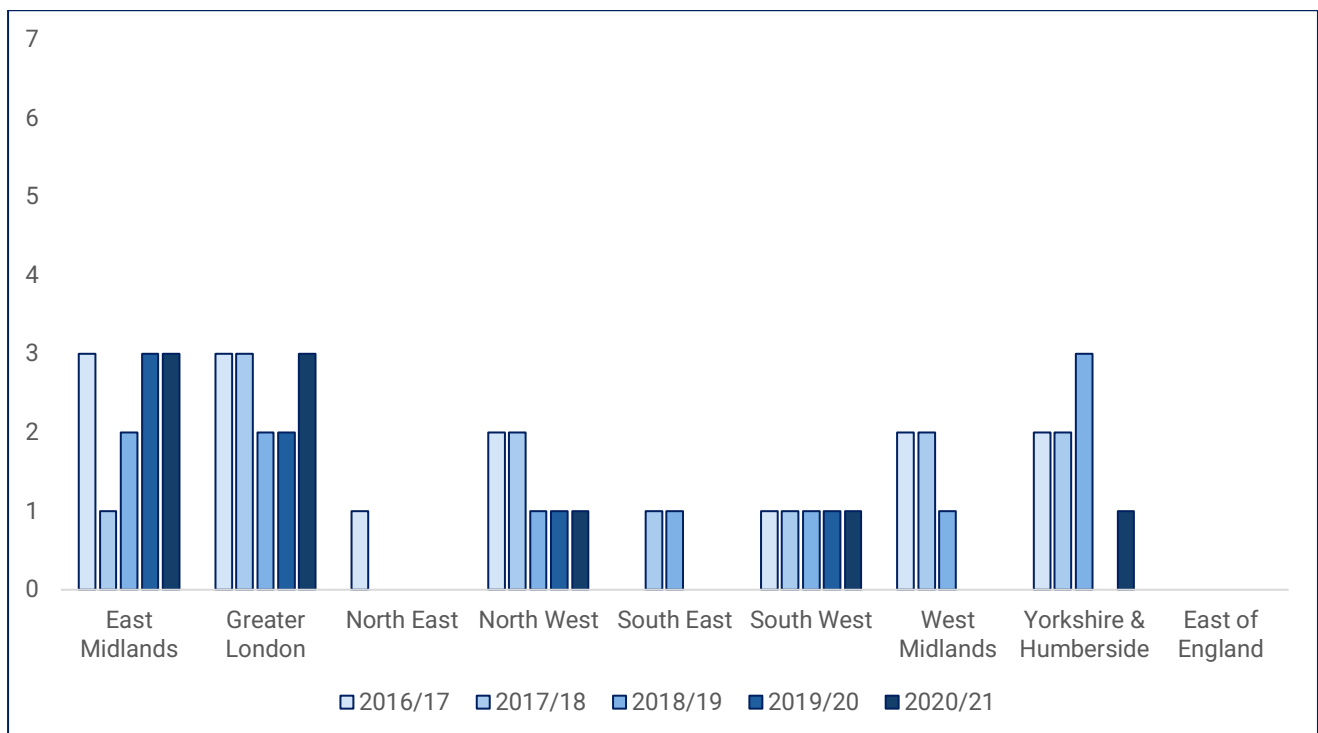
FIGURE 3: Total Number of Undergraduate Courses per Region Returning Data



Note: This year we did not receive a return from a university in the South East which does offer an undergraduate course, and so this is not shown.

Five regions offered postgraduate courses in this past year, up from four in 2019/20, but down on previous years. There are distance learning options available.

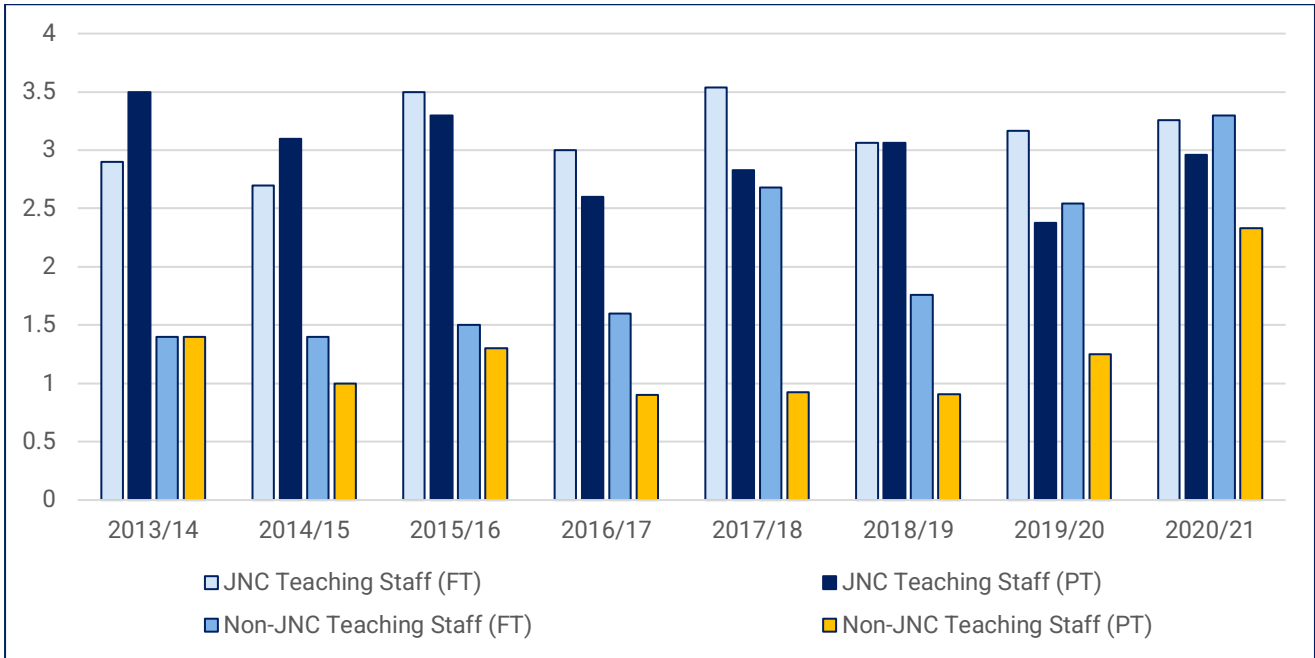
FIGURE 4: Total Number of Postgraduate Courses per Region Returning Data



5.0.2 Staffing Levels

Data provided on the average number of staff used per course shows that, on average, the number of JNC-qualified teaching staff has remained relatively stable, and that there has been a rise in the amount of non-JNC staff per course, especially for full-time teaching staff.

FIGURE 5: Average number of Core Staff per Course by Type



Every single course bar one had at least one full-time JNC-qualified lecturer, the exception being one small college had three part-time JNC-qualified lecturers.

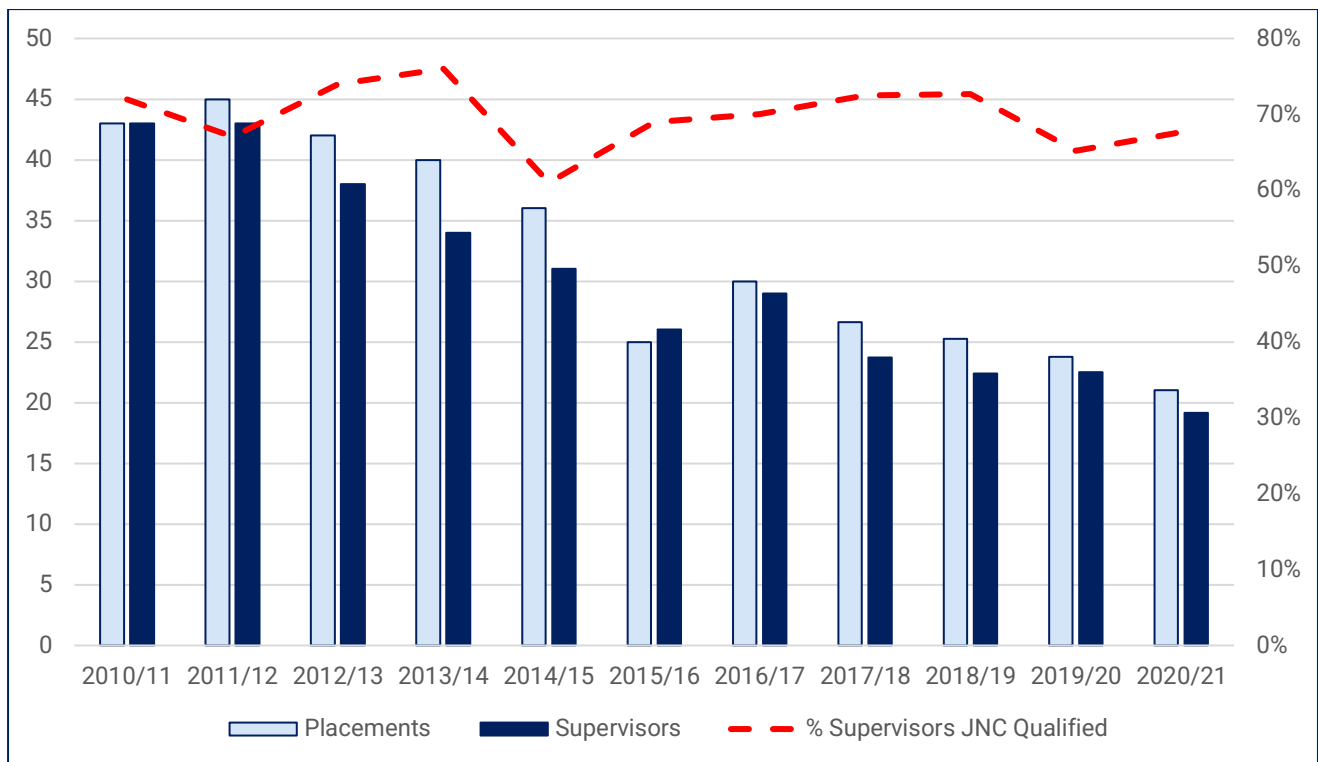
The benefits of an increased number of non-JNC staff were stated as being beneficial for specific areas of expertise, including:

- Qualified social workers providing expertise around safeguarding.
- Local social entrepreneurs providing expertise into a social enterprise module.

5.0.3 Fieldwork Placements

In previous years we have reported the average number of placements and supervisors per course and the same data shows a continued downward trend in the number of placements and supervisors being used per course, and that the percentage of supervisors who are qualified are trending below 70%.

FIGURE 6: Placement and Supervisor Data per course



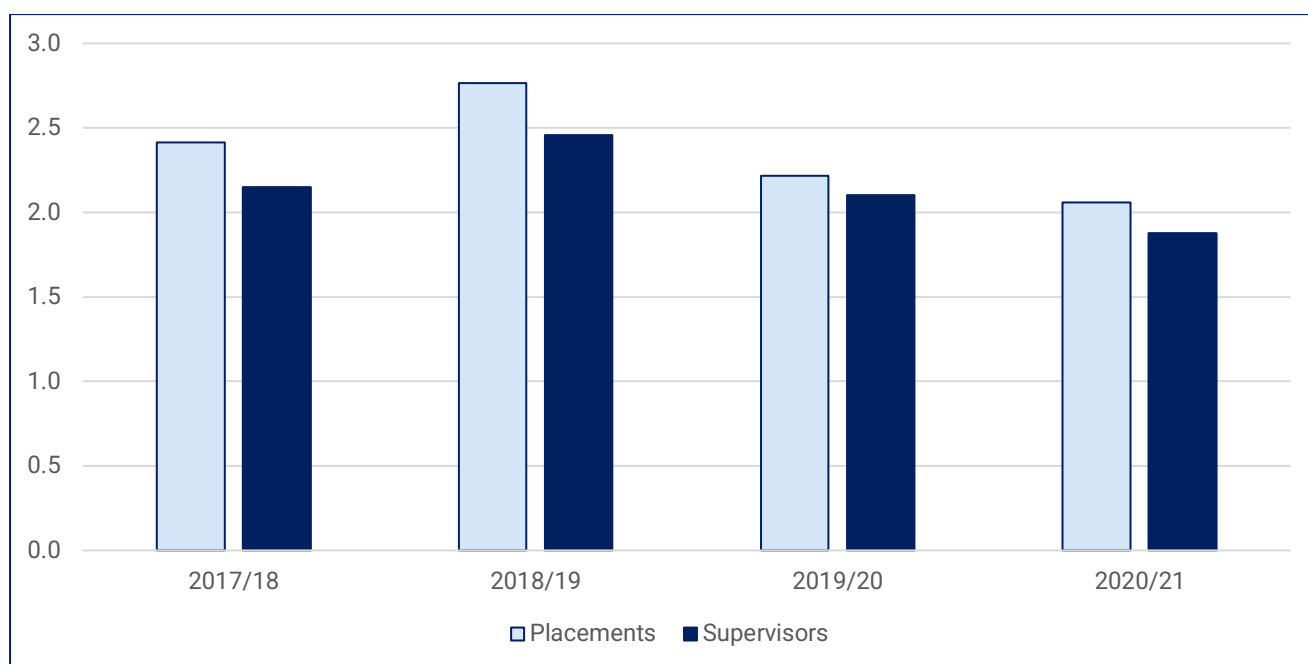
However, as student numbers have declined on each course, so have the number of placements, and since 2017/18 we have therefore also tracked the average number of placements and supervisors per student on courses.

The average number of placements and supervisors per student has decreased in each of the past two years.

The evidence provides clear reasons for this in that:

- There had been a reduction in the required amount of supervised placement hours necessary to qualify due to Covid-19.
- Fieldwork supervision is changing for students as more students undertake placements in a wider variety of non-traditional settings (including via digital methods), meaning that some HEIs use a smaller 'pool' of supervisors to work across numerous settings in supporting those students where JNC-qualified supervisors may not be present in diverse settings.

FIGURE 7: Average number of Placements and Supervisors per Student



This year we asked for further information about fieldwork placements and found that the importance of fieldwork placements was recognised across all HEIs, with some examples of students gaining unique experiences and/or being subsequently recruited through their placements.

There were some specific difficulties around placements which were mentioned:

- An increasing shift to online-learning had created difficulties in provision of appropriate placement and supervision for what was a newer method of delivery.
- International students had limited experience of youth work as might be traditionally recognised in England, and instead had wider community or social care backgrounds.
- Providing suitable placements for distance-learning students who lived in areas where the provider had no existing networks.

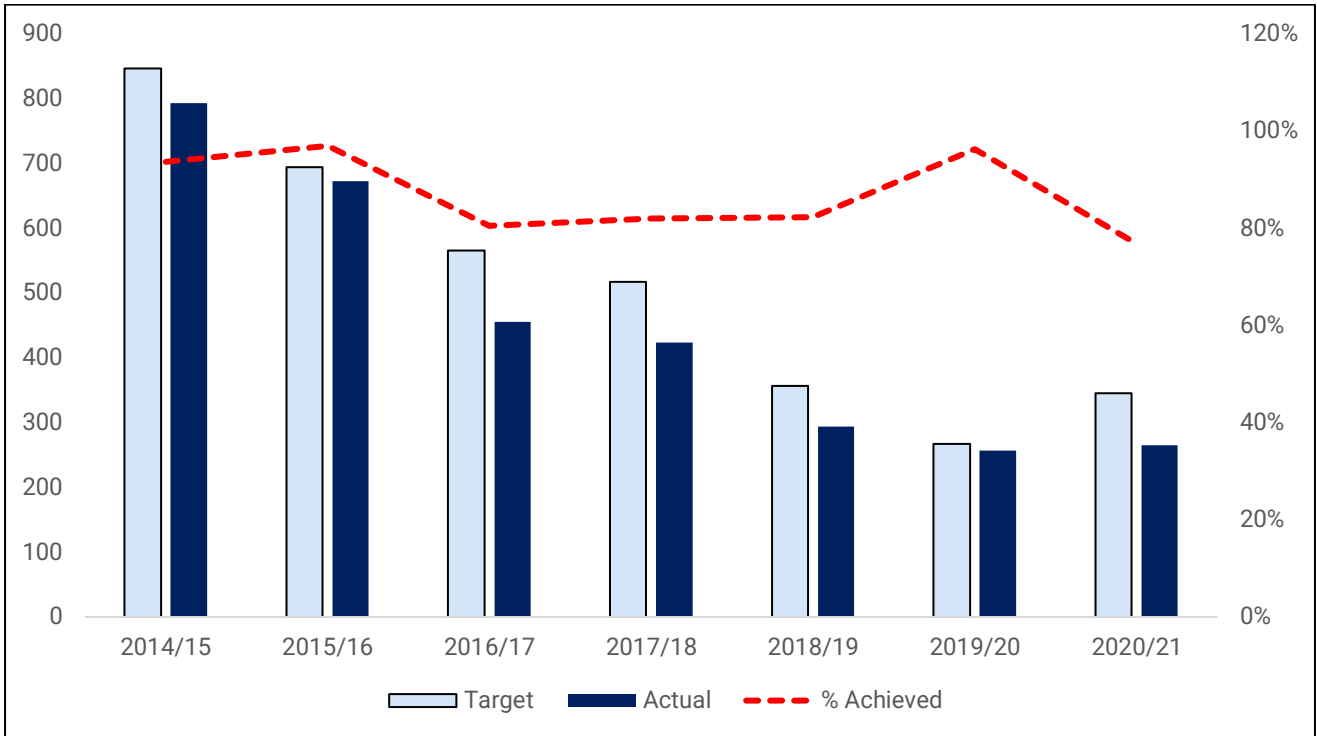
However, despite challenges course providers have maintained a commitment towards offering JNC qualified support across the supervision element to students including by:

- Contracting with external 'pools' of supervisors to work across numerous settings
- Providing suitable placement settings, especially through local networks or graduates
- Providing JNC supervision to work across numerous sites, and support and guidance to on-site non-JNC supervisors to assure quality and variety in the placements available according to the student's preference.

5.0.4 Recruitment and Student Numbers

The decline in student numbers has been arrested this year, with a slight uplift in recorded students. It is predicted this uplift will continue as we see new programmes emerging and the establishment of the Youth Work Apprenticeship.

FIGURE 8: Total Number of Students vs. Target

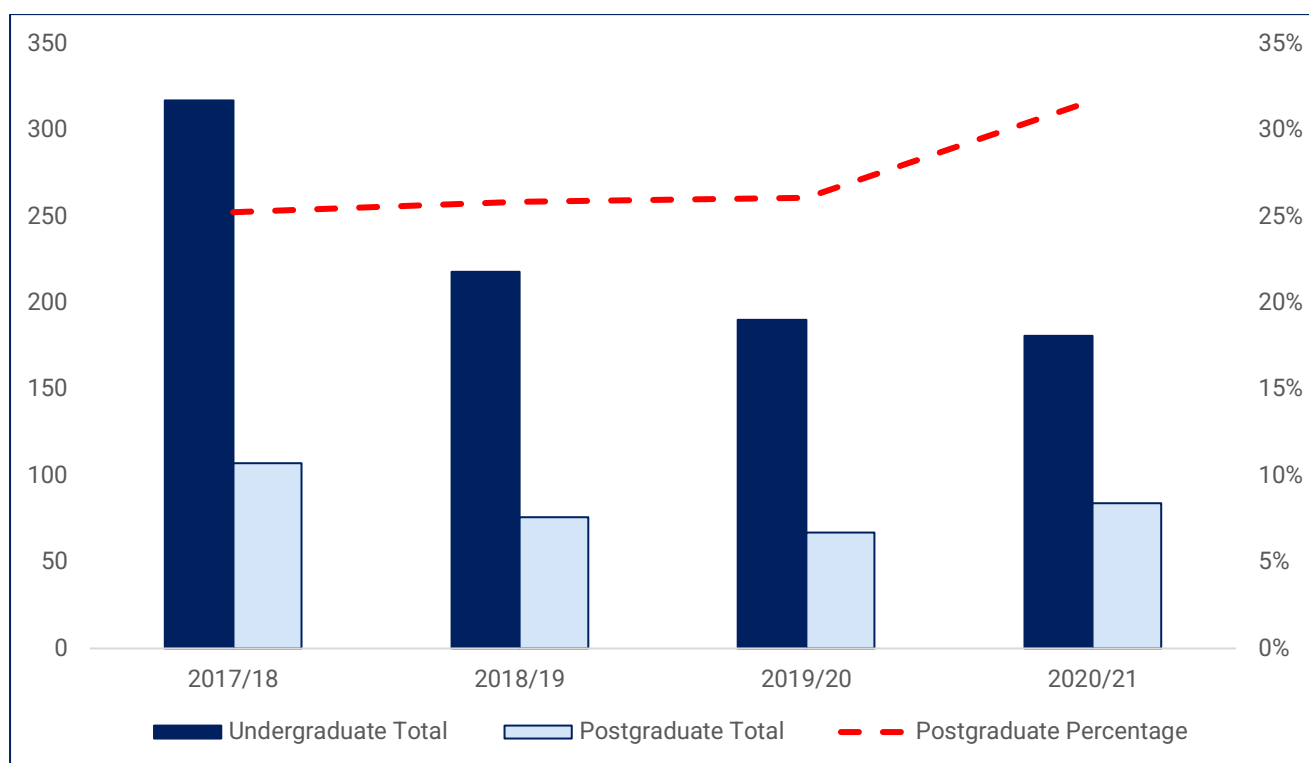


Breaking this down by course type shows that there has been a greater proportion of students each year who have been undertaking postgraduate courses, making up nearly 1 in 3 of all students.



There was a slight uplift in recorded students this year, arresting the decline in student numbers from the previous years

FIGURE 9: Student Recruitment Numbers by Type of Course



Recruitment remains a large obstacle, with reasons given continuing to show consistency across recent years, especially due to:

Finances

- *Cuts and restricted funding leaving employers with limited or no staff development budgets.*
- *Financial constraints continue to impact on the ability of students to afford fees otherwise.*
- *Lack of bursaries or other financial support.*

Marketing and awareness

- *A lack of job adverts asking for a degree in Youth Work*
- *Wider perceptions that career options are limited and/or insecure*

Structural changes to the sector

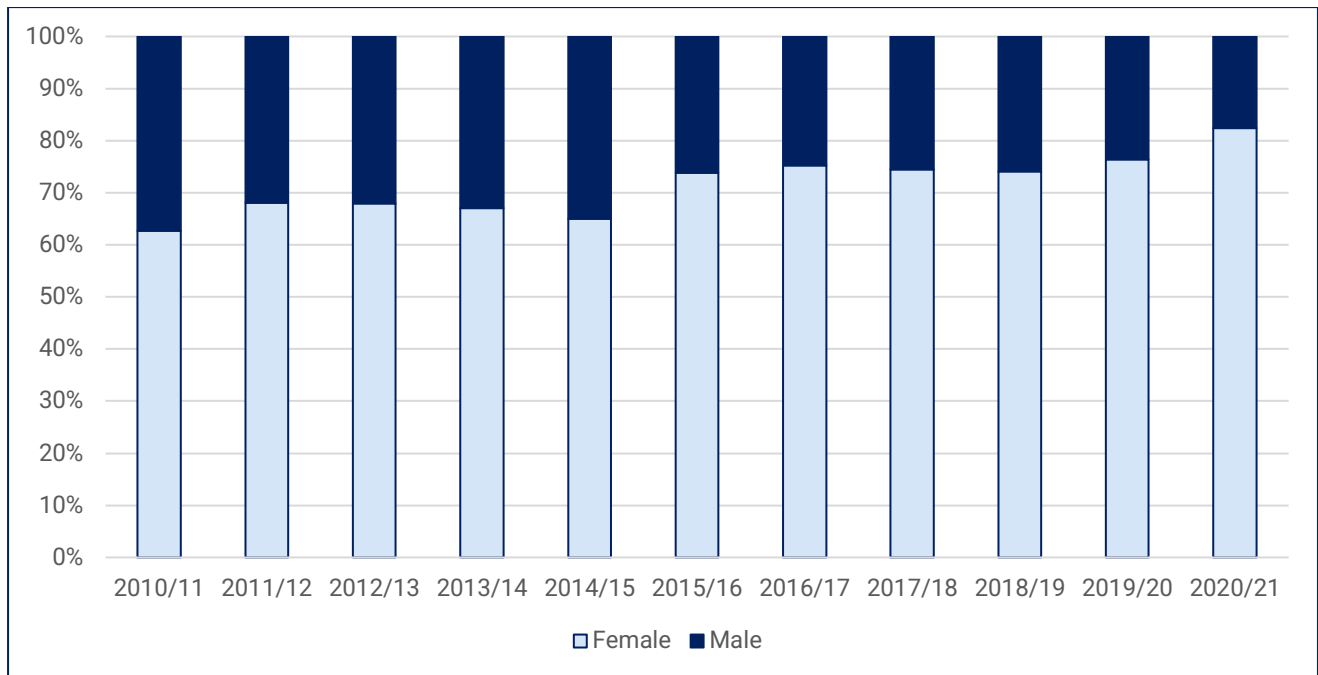
- *A loss of 'pipeline' as the number of local youth services reduces*
 - *This impacts on recruitment where courses stipulate the need for 'experience'*
- *A loss of 'pipeline' between Level 2 qualifications and Level 6*

5.0.5 New Student Demographics - Sex

There is continuing trend of a large sex imbalance in student recruitment with 82% of all students being female in this past year. This is well above the national average for all courses of c. 57% of enrolled students being female, a figure consistent since at least 2014/15.¹

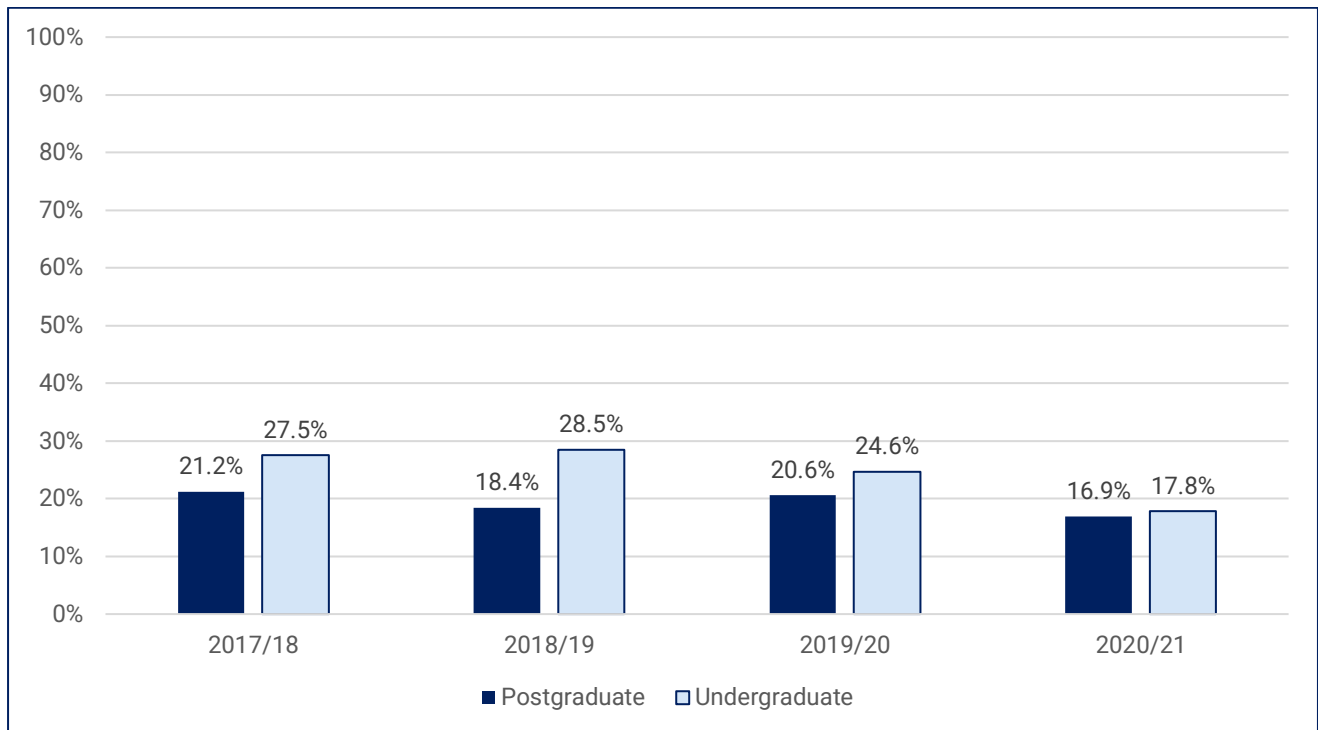
¹ Available at; <https://www.hesa.ac.uk>

FIGURE 10: Percentage of All New Students by Sex



Whilst males have been vastly under-represented at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels since 2017/18, this year sees their representation decrease further such that it is at the lowest level for each.

FIGURE 11: Percentage of New Male Students by Course Type

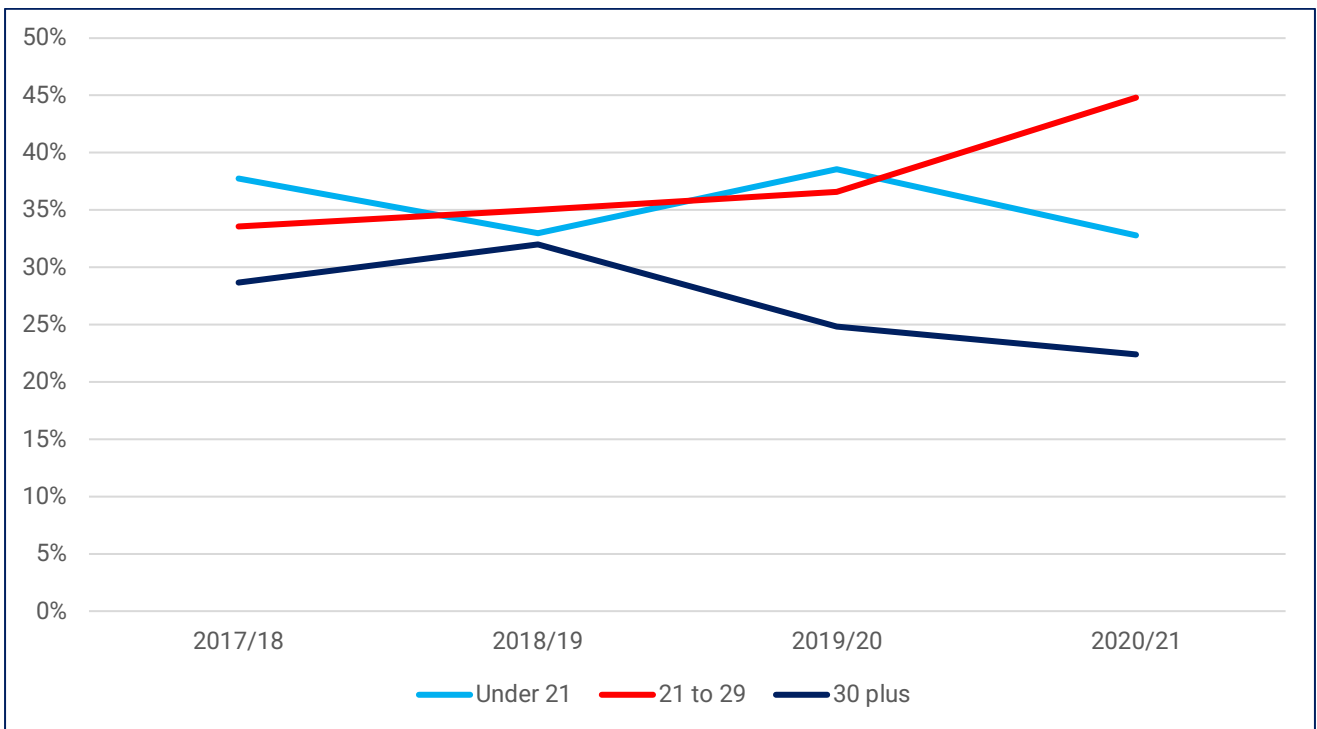


5.0.6 New Student Demographics – Age

The age profile of undergraduates on Youth and Community Work courses is far older than the national average for other undergraduate entry, in which c. 55% are under the age of 21.²

Whilst there is no trend in recent years in the proportion of under-21s entering undergraduate study, we do see an increased proportion of new students under 30, with a complimentary decrease in those aged over 30.

FIGURE 12: Proportion of Undergraduate Students by Age-Band



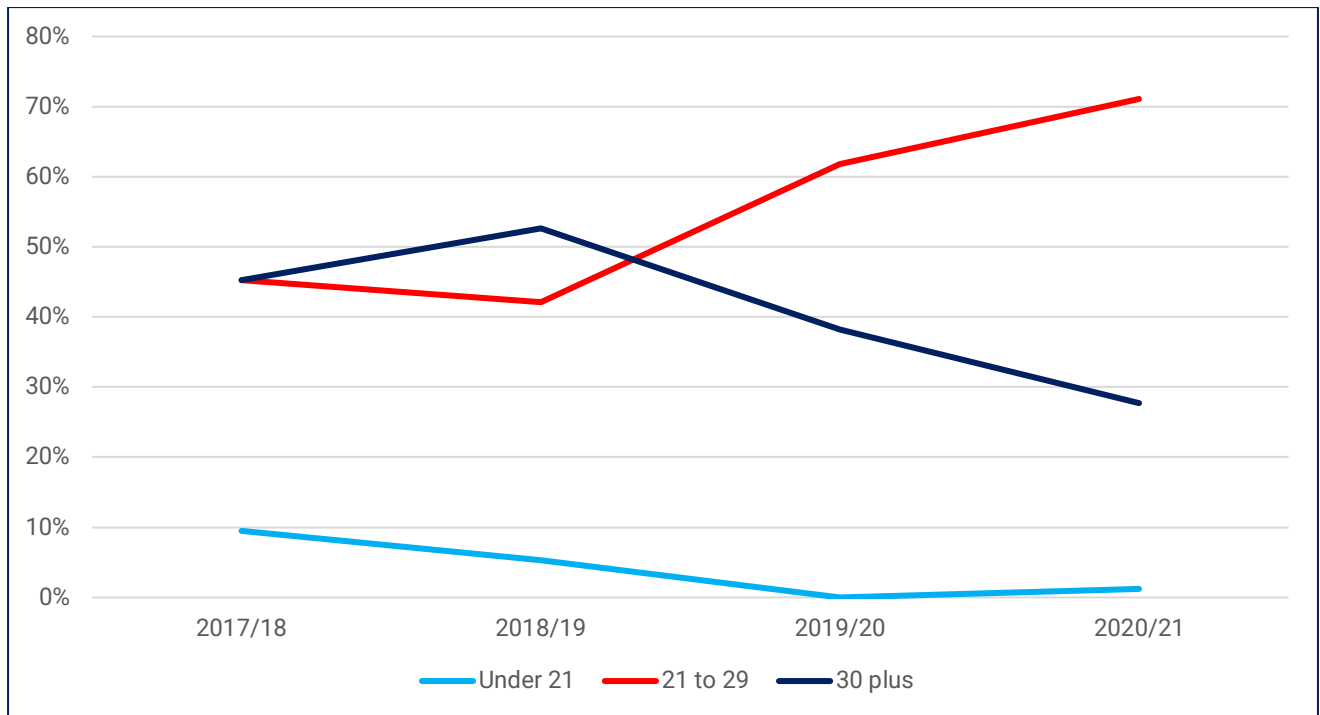
The increasing trend for undergraduate students to continue into further postgraduate study also sees a recent upwards trend of under 30s making up the largest portion of new recruits.



The average age of undergraduate students remains higher than the national average

² Available at; <https://www.hesa.ac.uk>

FIGURE 13: Proportion of Postgraduate Students by Age-Band



A recent upward trend sees under 30s making up the largest proportion of new recruits.

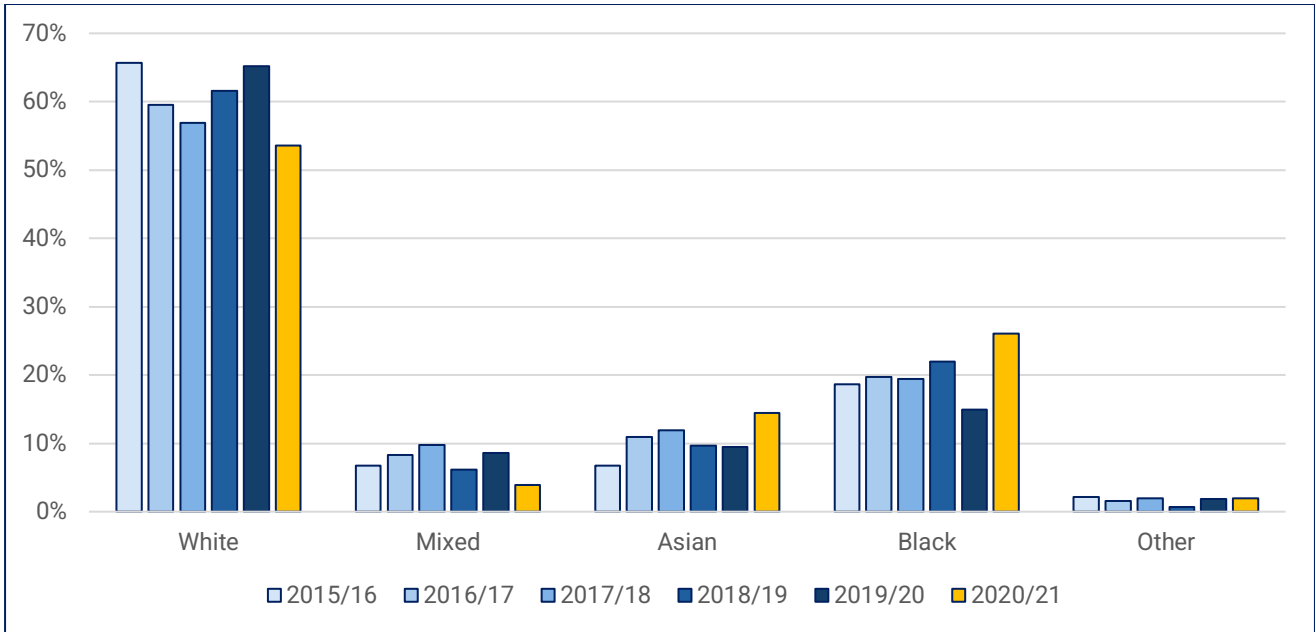


5.0.7 New Student Demographics – Ethnicity

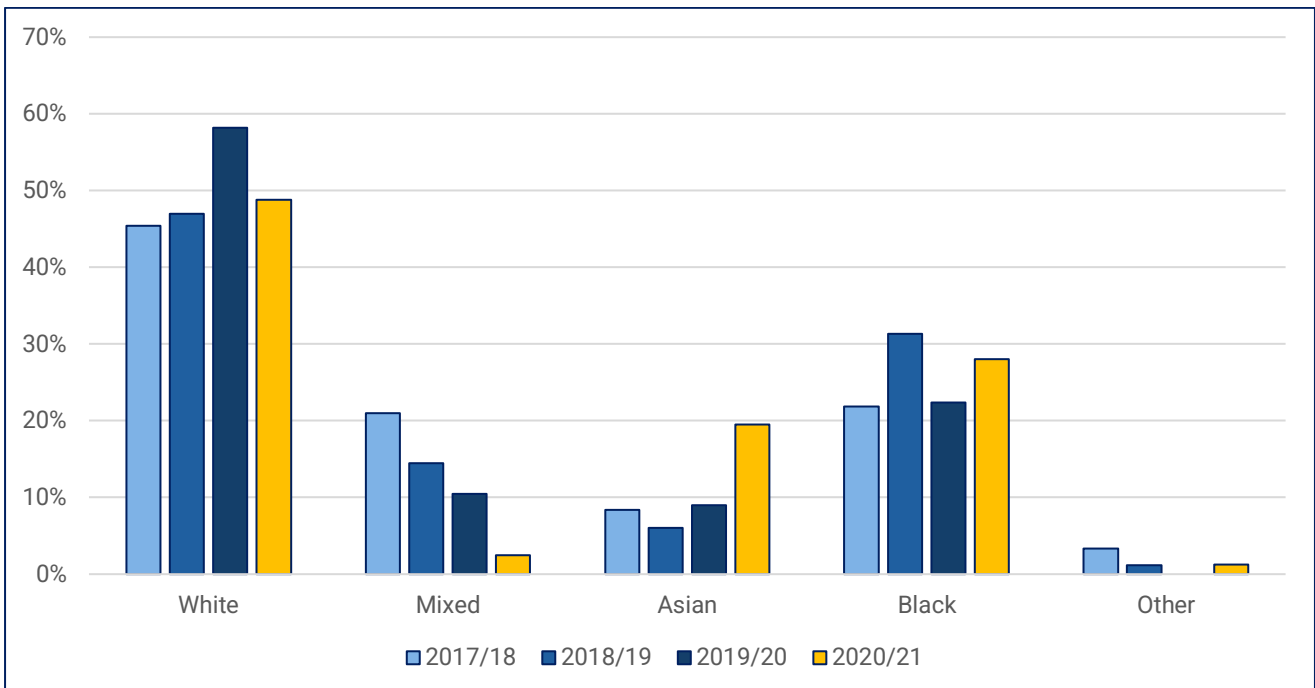
Data on ethnicity is collected in accordance with the categories recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality, based on categories as recognised by Office for National Statistics. Information is requested under sixteen categories of ethnic origin which are summarised into groupings as per below.

The intake of students continues to be increasingly more diverse than the UK average for all HEI student enrolments with fewer white students. This year saw the smallest proportion of white students on record.

FIGURE 14: Ethnic Background of All New Students



At Postgraduate level, the percentage of white students is proportionally lower still, having been under 50% in 3 of the past 4 years, with around 1 in 4 new recruits being black over that period.



5.0.8 New Student Demographics – Disability

Over the past five years the percentage of new recruits with a disability has consistently been near the 20% mark, with 3% to 6% of all students registered disabled. There is no further breakdown available regarding the types of disability.

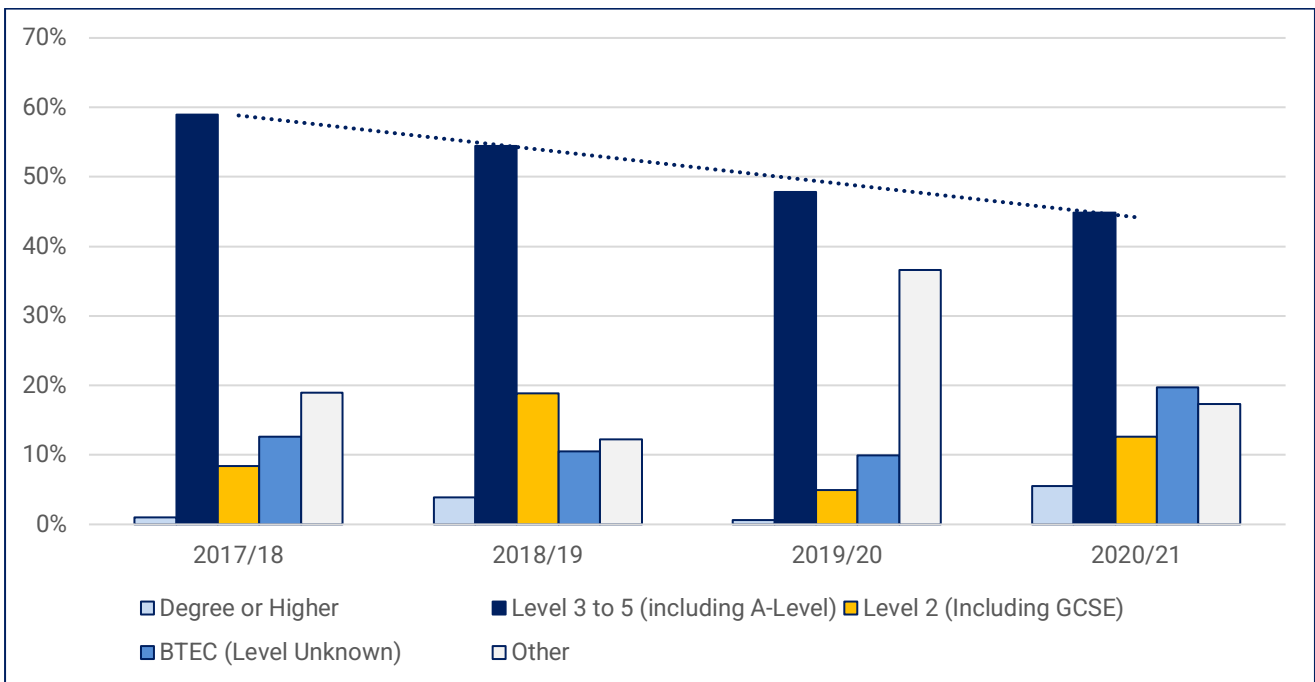
5.0.9 New Student Demographics – Qualifications at Entry

Postgraduate courses are naturally well populated with students who have at least a degree level qualification. Over the last 3 years at least 90% of students have held an undergraduate degree.

At undergraduate level there is a steady downwards trend in the proportion of new students who have an A-Level upon entry.³ This, combined with a smaller proportion of undergraduate students being 21 or under, suggests that youth work is not a favoured route for those leaving formal education.

The proportion of new undergraduate students having a BTEC was at 20% this year, the highest on record. However, we do not know which academic level the BTEC qualifications are equivalent to.

FIGURE 15: Proportion of Undergraduate Students by Highest Level of Qualification

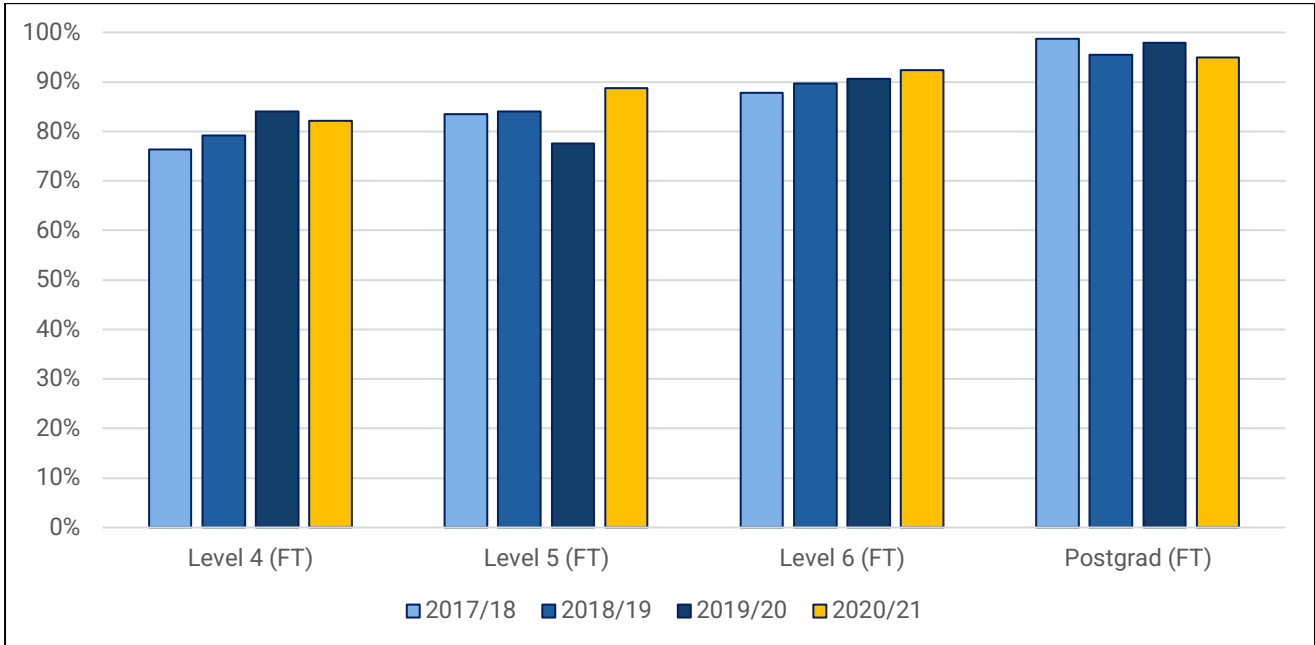


³ In last year’s report we incorrectly stated ‘at least A-Level’, but the level of any BTEC qualifications is unknown.

5.1.0 Current students – Attendance, Completion and Retention

The numbers of full-time students attending at least 80% of all lessons generally increase with the level of study.⁴

FIGURE 16: Percentage of Full-Time Students with 80% Attendance or Greater



Last year, the reasons for low attendance were not wholly attributed to the pandemic, but rather reflect personal circumstances which may have been exacerbated because of the pandemic.

In this year, there was a slightly greater emphasis on the pandemic being a causal factor in reduced attendance rates, with a ‘shift to online learning’ cited most frequently as the largest disruptor.

Promisingly the attendance rate of full-time Level 4 students was at 84%, the highest since at least 2014/15 despite the pandemic and a switch to online-learning.


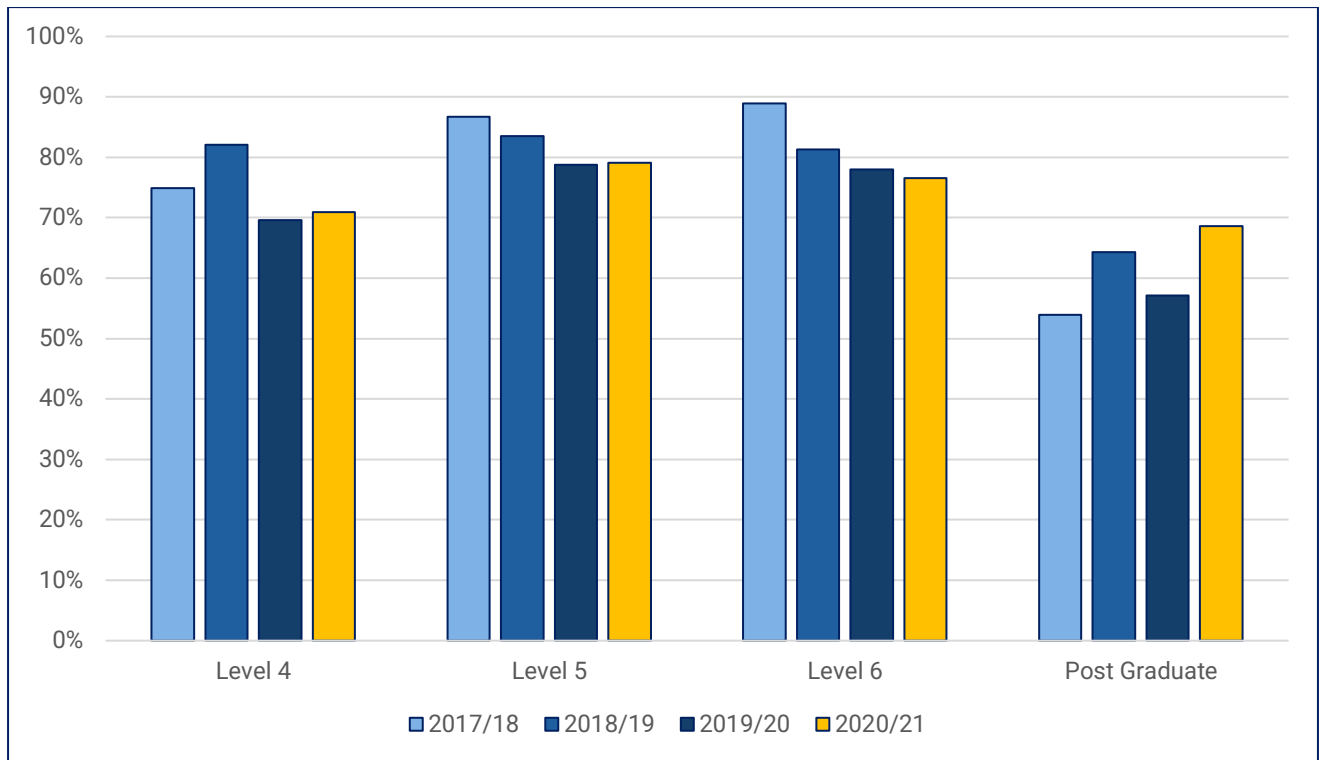
In the last year we reported that the pandemic delayed completion for all students on various courses and exacerbated existing difficulties for those who have further commitments outside of study.

As with attendance, the effects of the pandemic were given a greater emphasis in the responses from HEI representatives, who have stated that for several students, the ability to continue with altered ways of working was not sustainable over a longer term, including:

- Demands of caring responsibilities.
- Childcare issues (particularly when attendance could not be maintained because of child illness and / or parenting from home).
- Other family / household barriers.
- Altered financial or employment circumstances.

⁴ In previous years we provided figures for part-time students also, but there are too few to make robust analyses.

FIGURE 17: Completion Rates for all Full-Time Students



Level 4, 5 and post graduate students (full-time) all saw an increase in completion rates compared to 2019 / 20

5.1.1 Current students – Non-Completion

In 2019/20, rates of deferral were high at level 6 and for postgraduates. In 2020/21, a high proportion of postgraduates withdrew all together, suggesting that deferral in one year may increase the likelihood of withdrawal in the next.

Given this, it is important to note that deferral rates were also relatively high at each level in 2020/21, as shown in the tables below:

Table 1: Percentage of Students Not Completing

Level 4	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Academic Failure	7%	8%	7%	5%
Fieldwork Failure	2%	1%	0%	2%
Deferral	4%	2%	2%	6%
Withdrawal	9%	4%	5%	6%
Transfer	3%	4%	3%	1%

Level 5	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Academic Failure	4%	8%	6%	3%
Fieldwork Failure	1%	2%	1%	0%
Deferral	5%	2%	2%	11%
Withdrawal	1%	3%	7%	5%
Transfer	1%	0%	5%	2%

Level 6	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Academic Failure	4%	7%	9%	5%
Fieldwork Failure	0%	3%	0%	2%
Deferral	7%	8%	12%	12%
Withdrawal	0%	1%	0%	2%
Transfer	0%	0%	2%	3%

Postgraduate	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Academic Failure	5%	5%	2%	3%
Fieldwork Failure	1%	2%	0%	1%
Deferral	11%	4%	29%	10%
Withdrawal	14%	5%	7%	16%
Transfer	0%	0%	5%	3%

With more students on youth and community work courses being from an older age-profile or being already employed there are generally more responsibilities and commitments outside of studies which affect students' ability to complete (such as childcare, child-birth, and employment).

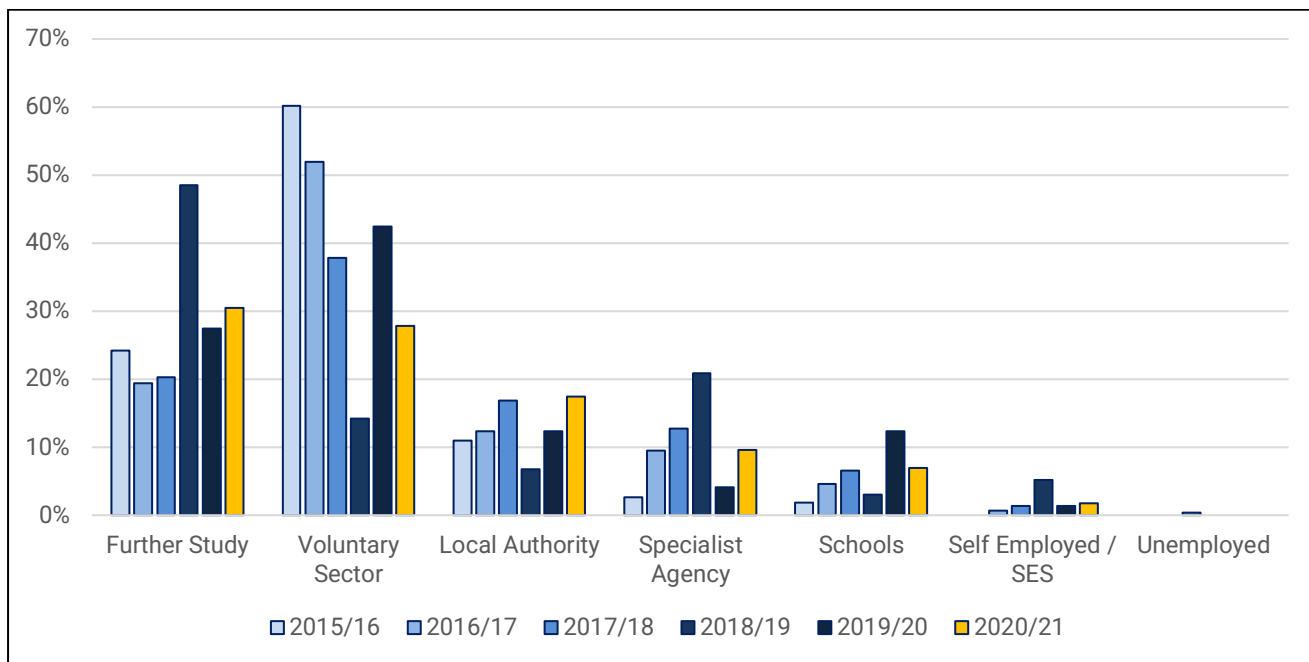
Mental health also continues to be an oft-mentioned reason for non-completion, and placing a burden on students and staff. For the latter, the increased pastoral care and closer tailored support offered by HEIs in recent years has increased in intensity over the pandemic, whilst external pressures on recruitment numbers alongside pressures of delivering during Covid-19 has also

driven up strains on teaching staff. There are also factors relating to the type of work students undertake on placement and if suitable support is in place to safeguard their wellbeing.

5.1.2 – Destination of Graduates

Student destination data continues to be difficult for HEIs to collect, but that which is collected shows both a continued diversity in destinations, and a low to zero unemployment rate.

FIGURE 18: Student Leavers Grouped by Destination



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Published by National Youth Agency
 e. nya@nya.org.uk | t. 0116 242 7350

Registration No. 2912597 | Charity No. 1035804
 National Youth Agency, 9 Newarke Street, Leicester LE1 5SN