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STATISTICAL BULLETIN

Higher Level Apprenticeship Steady State in Northern Ireland

Academic Year 2017/18

Published 27th February 2019



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Reader Information

Outline	This official statistics release presents a range of analysis regarding enrolments during the steady state phase of the Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) programme. This covers provision across the academic year 2017/18 delivered in the Northern Ireland Further Education (FE) Sector. The statistics presented in this bulletin cover the characteristics of those enrolling and the courses within FE colleges.
Theme	Children, Education and Skills
Purpose	Monitor and report on enrolment activity in the steady state phase of HLA programmes in Northern Ireland.
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Publication Date	27 th February 2019
Reporting Period	Academic Year 2017/18
Publication Issue	1
Statistical Quality	Information detailed in this release has been quality assured with FE colleges prior to release.
Target audience	DfE, directors of FE colleges in Northern Ireland, board members of FE colleges, Directors of HE institutions in Northern Ireland, Board members of HE institutions, educational professionals, employers, academics, media, young people and members of the public interested in work-based learning programmes.
Price	Free

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Executive Summary

This official statistics release presents a range of analysis regarding enrolments during the steady state phase of the HLA programme. This covers provision across the academic year 2017/18 delivered in the NI Further Education (FE) Sector. The statistics presented in this bulletin cover the characteristics of those enrolling in FE colleges.

This is the first Official Statistics bulletin on HLA steady state activity to be published by the Department. The frequency of future bulletins will be determined by a user consultation covering a number of areas, including the frequency and content of future publications.

Key Points:

- Since the commencement of the Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) steady state programmes, covering 2017/18, there have been a total of 327 enrolments (324 individuals) in the scheme in Further Education (FE) Colleges.
- The largest proportion (38.0%) of individuals enrolled on HLA steady state programmes were in the age group '16 to 19'.
- The majority (62.0%) of individuals enrolled on HLA steady state programmes were male.
- Over a third (38.6%) of individuals enrolled on HLA steady state programmes were from the two most deprived quintiles.
- Nearly all (99.1%) HLA steady state enrolments were at Level 5.
- The largest proportion (36.1%) of HLA steady state enrolments were studying 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies'.
- Enrolments identified as Broad STEM accounted for nearly three-fifths (59.6%) of all HLA steady state enrolments, while there were 56.6% in Narrow STEM subjects (a subset of Broad STEM).

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full text
BMC	Belfast Metropolitan College
CDR	Consolidated Data Return
DfE	Department for the Economy
DipHE	Diploma of Higher Education
EF	Entitlement Framework
FE	Further Education
FLU	Funded Learning Unit
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HLA	Higher Level Apprenticeship
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
NI	Northern Ireland
NIMDM	Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure
NRC	Northern Regional College
NWRC	North West Regional College
PLAQ	Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications
RRQ	Register of Regulated Qualifications
SERC	South Eastern Regional College
SOA	Super Output Area
SRC	Southern Regional College
SSA	Sector Subject Area
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWC	South West College

About Apprenticeships and Youth Training Finances and Statistics Branch

Branch functions

Apprenticeships and Youth Training Finances and Statistics Branch is responsible for a range of analytical support during the development of the reformed traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. This includes the collection, quality assurance, analysis and publication of statistical information on provision delivered during the steady state phase of programmes. Data have been supplied by the Further Education (FE) colleges across Northern Ireland where delivery of the steady state phase has been carried out. The Head of the Branch is the Principal Economist, George Sampson. The Branch aims to present information in a meaningful way and provide advice on its uses to customers in the Committee for the Economy, FE colleges, Universities, Professional Advisory Groups, policy branches within DfE, other educational organisations, academia, private sector organisations, charity/voluntary organisations as well as the general public.

Information is disseminated through a number of key statistical publications.

A list of those publications is available from:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistics-publication-schedule>

An Official Statistics Publication

The statistics within this bulletin have been compiled in accordance with Official Statistics guidelines. They aim to meet identified user needs; are accessible and explained; are produced in accordance with sound methods; and are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Further information on the Code of Practice for Statistics is available at:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/>

Feedback

As we want to engage with users of our statistics, we invite you to feedback your comments on this publication to:

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Introduction

The scope of the Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA) programme can be found in the policy publication '[Securing our Success - The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships](#)' (published June 2014), which states that the ambition of the Department is that Northern Ireland's system of apprenticeships will be of a gold standard and will form a key part of a new skills landscape. This system will offer a spectrum of support from entry level up to level 8 (equivalent to a Doctorate), facilitate lifelong learning and allow participants to move in and out of professional education and training at their own pace. The complementary and connected [Apprenticeship Strategy](#) will, among other outcomes, provide opportunities for young people to progress into apprenticeships.

The pilot phase HLA provision, starting between November 2012 and June 2015, was managed through management information prior to 2015/16 and therefore not separately identifiable in FE enrolment data for earlier years and not presented in this publication. The pilot phase HLA provision over the period 2015/16 and 2016/17 was separately identifiable and is available [here](#).

The HLA steady state commenced in the academic year 2017/18 and programmes were delivered across Further Education (FE) Colleges. This statistical bulletin presents a range of analysis regarding enrolments during the steady state phase of HLA. This covers provision across the academic year 2017/18 in FE colleges across Northern Ireland (NI).

The figures in this statistical bulletin are a full year count of enrolments. However, it should be noted that due to the curriculum structure of HLA, students may be enrolled on more than one course at a given time and may, therefore, be counted as two or more enrolments. Other related statistical reports can be found at:

[Further Education Statistics](#)

[ApprenticeshipsNI Statistics](#)

[Higher Education Statistics](#)

Structure

There is a single section to this bulletin and the analysis is broken down to show the trend and patterns of the HLA programme at FE colleges during the academic year 2017/18.

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 presented here will always be greater than or equal to the number of individuals participating in the programme.

If individuals with certain characteristics enrol multiple times, it can skew analysis on personal characteristics, such as age, gender and location in which they live. As a result any personal characteristics analysed will focus on counts of individuals, while analysis of course characteristics will focus on enrolments.

The academic year 2017/18 is the first year of the HLA steady state programme and participants will typically be enrolled in a two or three year programme of study. Consequently, within 2017/18 data, there are no final year enrolments within the HLA steady state programme. In addition they will typically only have the opportunity to obtain the qualification they set out to achieve in the final year of the course. As a result of the final year methodology employed on provision delivered in FE there is currently no performance analysis available for those who commenced in 2017/18.

Explanatory Notes

In relation to data from FE colleges, [Annex B: Technical Notes](#) provides detailed information on the methodology used to produce the statistics and the definitions of the terms used within the report.

Where percentages are shown in the tables and figures, the base number used to calculate the percentages, within each category is shown in brackets e.g. (30). This is to provide context to the volume of enrolments or individuals within each category the percentages relate to.

Where tables and figures are mentioned within the commentary, these are hyperlinked to their location within the document.

Data Collection

The information provided by FE colleges presented in this statistical bulletin has been derived from the Consolidated Data Return (CDR), which came into operation for the 2013/14 academic year and is provided by FE colleges.

More information on the CDR process can be found in [Annex B: Technical Notes](#).

Additional Tables

Detailed Additional and Supplementary Tables are available on the DfE web page: [Higher Level Apprenticeship Steady state in Northern Ireland. Academic Year 2017/18](#).

Rounding

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

Data Quality

All information presented in this bulletin is based on data that have been validated and quality assured by FE colleges prior to publication. FE colleges are given a set period of time to submit the information to the Statistics & Research Branch (Tertiary Education), which performs a series of validation checks to ensure that information is consistent both within and across returns and analyses to monitor annual variations and emerging trends. Queries arising from validation checks are presented to FE colleges for clarification and, if required, returns may be amended and/or re-submitted. Finally, prior to the publication of this information, the data are presented to FE colleges for final sign-off. A short quality assessment on this analysis is available for further information in [Annex C: Quality measures](#).

Main Uses of Data

The main uses of the FE data in this report are to examine HLA steady state phase activity, to help assess programme delivery, for corporate monitoring, to inform and monitor related policy, and to respond to assembly questions and ad-hoc queries from the public.

DfE is responsible for the policy, strategic development and financing of the statutory FE sector. Analysis of data trends against key strategic priorities remains a crucial component of data development within DfE. The analysis within this report is particularly relevant in the context of the draft [Programme for Government \(2016-2021\)](#) commitment to increase the skill levels of those in employment.

Who will be interested?

The information presented in this statistical bulletin will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example, the statistics within and those derived from this bulletin may be used by DfE policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for the Economy discharging their duties, by the NI Assembly and DfE committee to scrutinise the HLA steady state phase, by other NI government departments, such as the Department of Education, by prospective students to inform their choices around further and higher education, by local businesses to quantify the supply of those qualifying in their business area, and by researchers and academics to try and understand the underlying trends. Further details about the uses made of HLA steady state phase statistics can be found in [Annex A: Definitions](#) and [Annex B: Technical Notes](#)

Contextual Information

For contextual information on the use of HLA steady state statistics and comparing levels of qualifications, please see the document:

[Contextual Information for Using HLA steady state Statistics](#)

Policy and Operational Context

For information on policy and operational context, please refer to:

[Policy and Operational Context for HLA](#)

Similar HLA Style Activity Information Elsewhere in the United Kingdom

Users should be aware that similar HLA style activity information in other administrations is not always measured in a comparable manner to that in Northern Ireland. Details of the similar HLA style activity information published elsewhere in the UK can be found as detailed below.

[England](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Wales](#)

Higher Level Apprenticeships

This section focuses on the Higher Level Apprenticeship provision delivered in Further Education (FE) colleges during the academic year 2017/18.

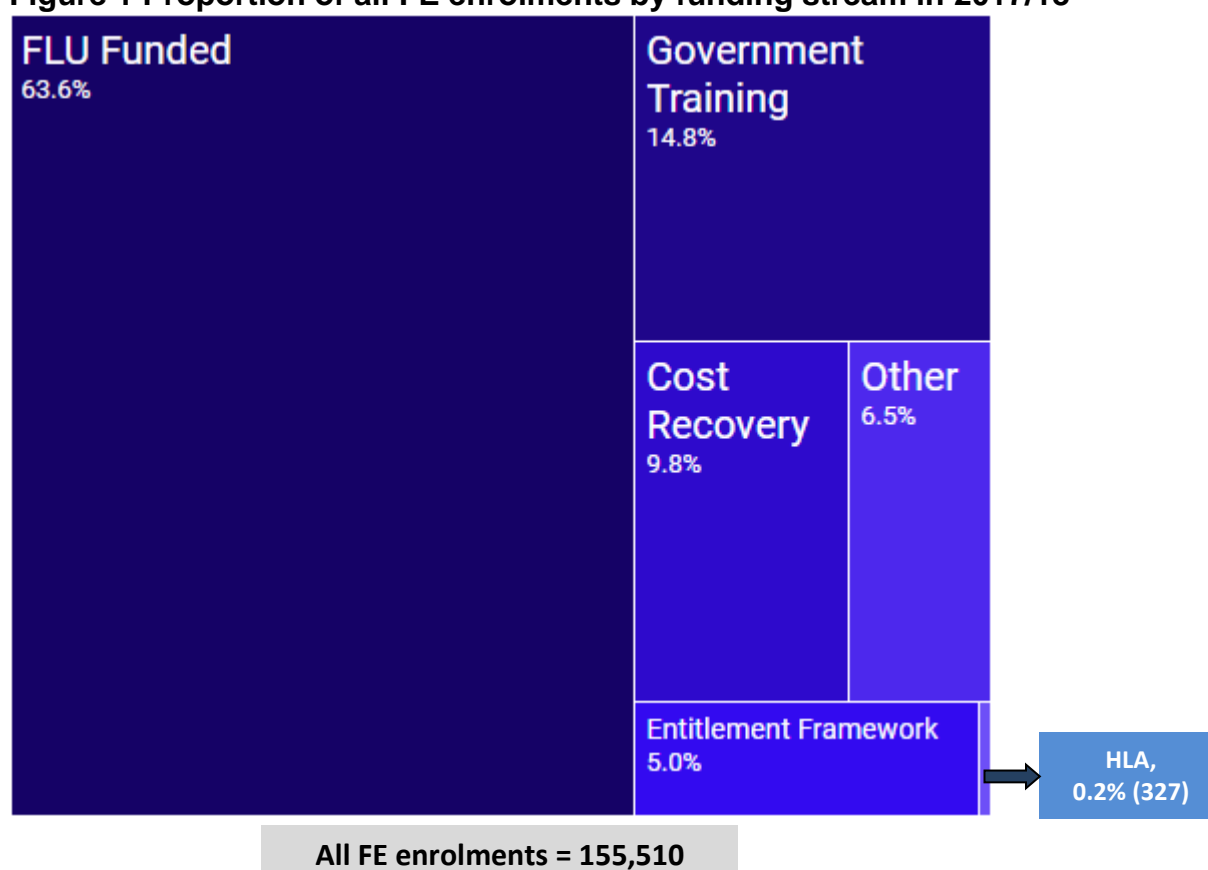
1.1 Proportion of all FE provision

Enrolments delivered through FE colleges can be funded through several funding streams. These include direct funding from Department for the Economy (DfE), through either the 'Funded Learning Unit' (FLU) mechanism or 'Government Training' programmes, such as 'Training for Success' or 'Steps to Work'. FE colleges can also receive funding from businesses/individuals, termed as 'Cost recovery', or from other government departments, such as Department of Education, through the 'Entitlement Framework' programme.

Enrolments funded by the HLA steady state programme within FE colleges in Northern Ireland are classified as 'Government Training' within the funding group ([see Section 1.3 within FE Activity publication](#)).

In 2017/18, 15.0% (23,349) of all (155,510) FE enrolments were allocated to the 'Government Training' funding group, of which 327 (0.2% of all FE enrolments) were HLA steady state enrolments (Figure 1 and Table A1).

Figure 1 Proportion of all FE enrolments by funding stream in 2017/18



1.2 Enrolments and Individuals 2017/18

All HLA enrolments during 2017/18 were delivered under the steady state programme, so if the term 'HLA enrolment(s)' is used within this report it refers to enrolments during the HLA steady state phase. 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 presented here will always be greater than or equal to the number of individuals participating in the programme.

Since the commencement of the steady state phase of the HLA programme, covering 2017/18, there have been a total of 327 enrolments (324 individuals) in the scheme in FE Colleges. The number of enrolments per individual is very close to one to one, at 1.01 in 2017/18 (Table 1).

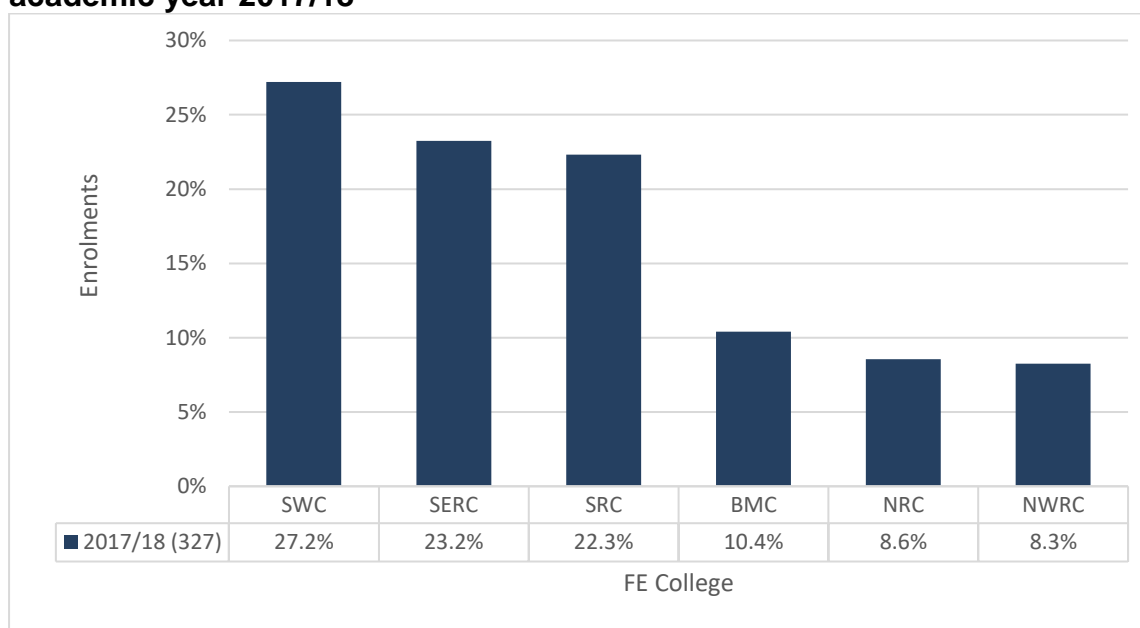
Table 1 HLA steady state enrolments and individuals in academic year 2017/18

	2017/18
Enrolments	327
Individuals	324
Enrolments per Individual	1.01

Where is HLA provision being delivered?

In 2017/18, South West College (SWC) had the largest proportion (27.2%) of HLA enrolments, closely followed by South Eastern Regional College (SERC) with 23.2%. The smallest proportions were in Northern Regional College (NRC) with 8.6% and North West Regional College (NWRC) with 8.3% (Figure 2, Table A2).

Figure 2 Proportion of HLA steady state enrolments by FE college in academic year 2017/18

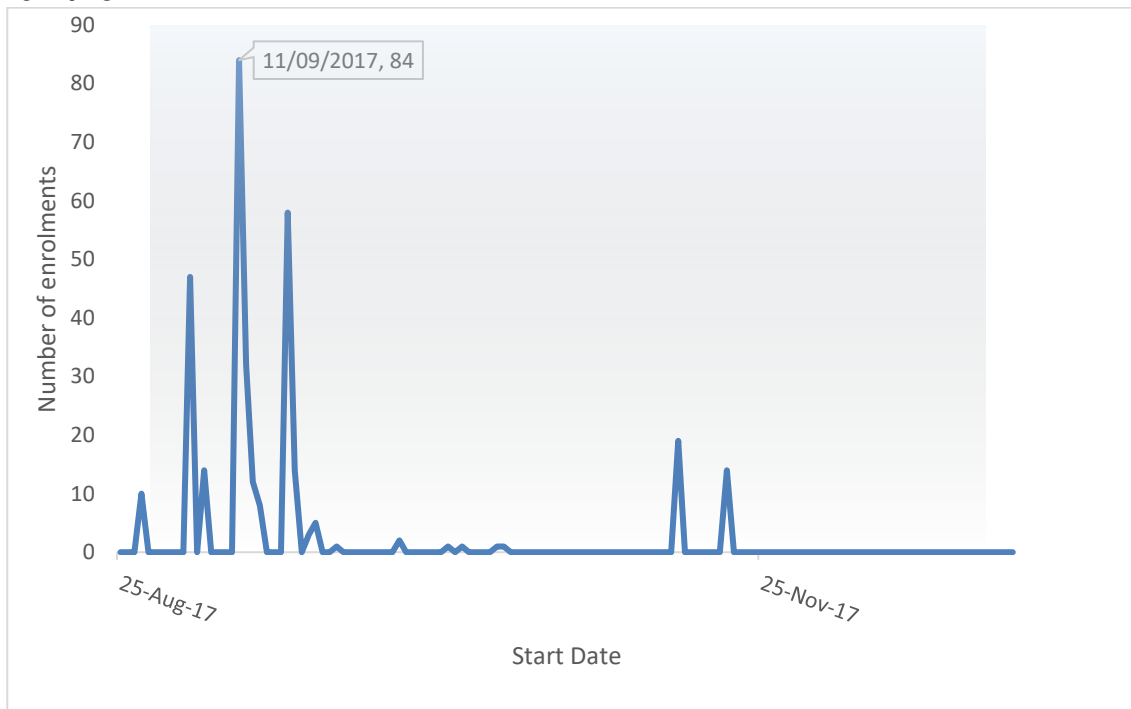


Start Dates

This report covers the academic year 2017/18. For FE information, each academic year period is defined by each FE college and potentially will differ across all six colleges. An academic year traditionally starts in August and finishes in July the following year.

As expected, the majority of enrolment start dates are at the beginning of each academic year, with most clustered around September, as demonstrated in Figure 3. Over this academic year period the largest peak occurred in mid-September 2017, with 84 enrolments (Figure 3, Table A3).

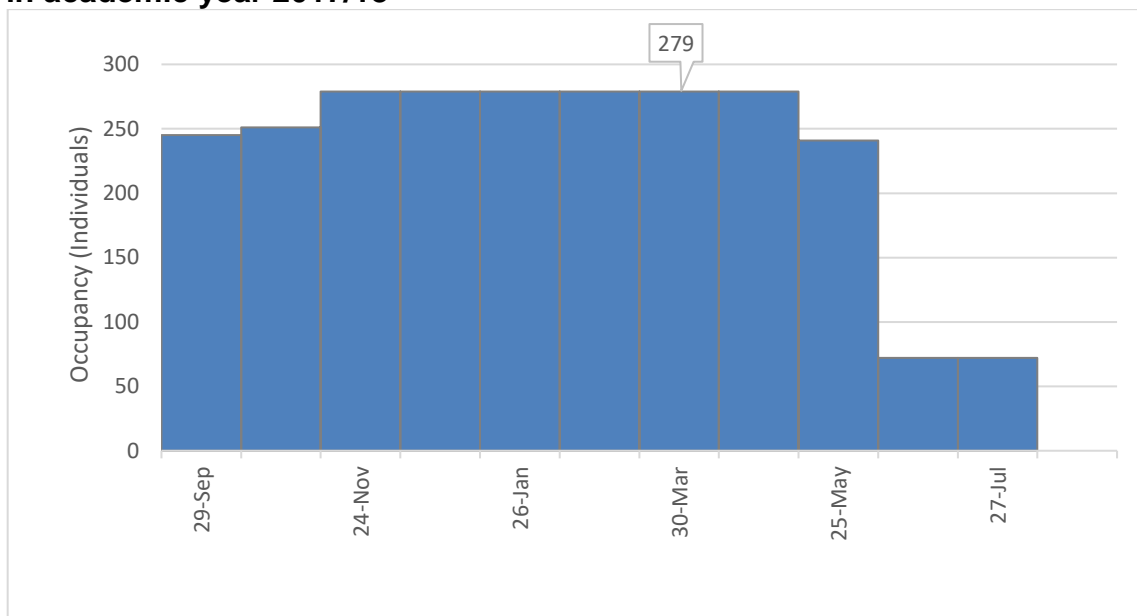
Figure 3 HLA steady state enrolments by start date in academic year 2017/18



Occupancy

The occupancy level of HLA steady state programmes is the total number of continuing/active individuals at a particular point in time. Figure 4 shows the occupancy level on the last Friday of each month during the academic year 2017/18. The highest monthly occupancy during 2017/18 was 279 individuals at the end of November 17 through to April 18 (Figure 4, Table A4).

Figure 4 Monthly occupancy of HLA steady state (continuing individuals) in academic year 2017/18



1.3 Regulated and Non-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'), which includes Vocational Qualifications Levels 4 to 8, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diplomas (HND), Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE) and degrees.

'Non-regulated enrolments' are those that either potentially lead to a formal qualification (at level 3 or below) that do not appear on the RRQ or do not usually lead to a formal qualification, typically hobby and leisure or recreational courses.

All (100.0%) HLA steady state enrolments were on regulated courses across all six colleges in 2017/18 (Table A5).

1.4 Personal Characteristics – Who is participating?

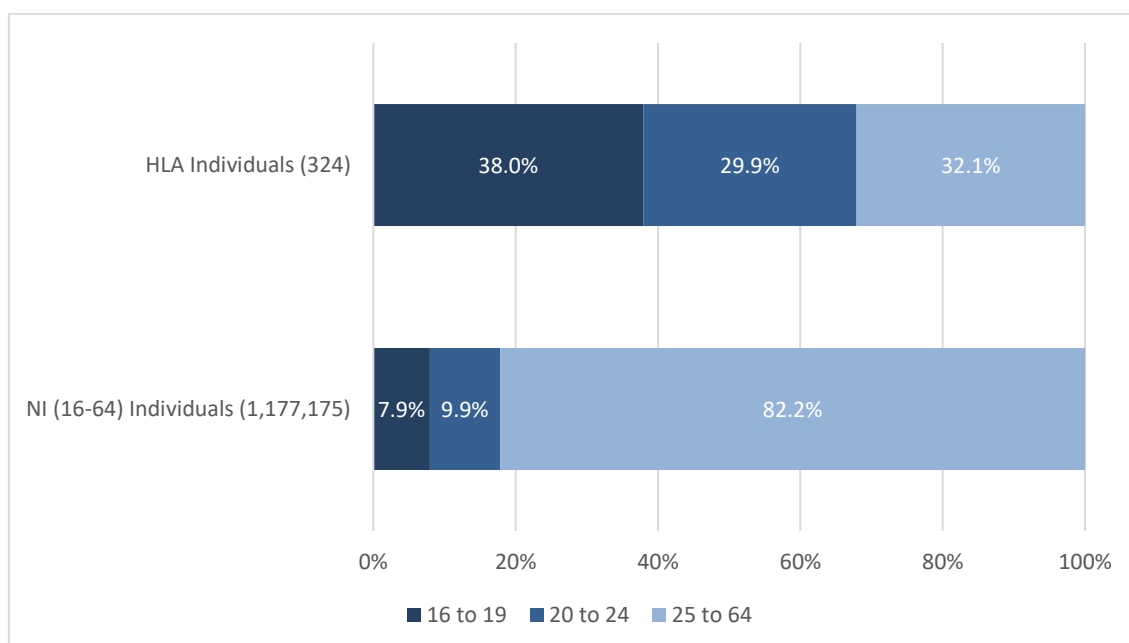
As mentioned earlier, an individual can be enrolled in a number of courses and therefore appear multiple times in the enrolment data. If individuals with certain characteristics enrol multiple times, it can skew analysis on personal characteristics, such as age, gender and location in which they live. In relation to HLA steady state provision delivered in FE colleges, the enrolment to individual ratio is close to one and therefore comparable to individuals. The 324 individuals will be focused on for analysis across age, gender and deprivation sections.

Age

In 2017/18, the largest proportion of individuals enrolled in the HLA steady state programme were in the age band '16 to 19' (38.0%). Those aged '20 to 24' made up 29.9% of provision, while 32.1% were aged '25 and over' (Figure 5, Table A6).

Based on mid-year NI population estimates of those aged '16 to 64' (working age) in 2017¹, the majority (82.2%) of individuals are aged '25 to 64'. The age group profile of those engaged in HLA steady state provision during 2017/18 is quite different to that of the '16 to 64' population of Northern Ireland. Those aged 16 to 19 form the smallest proportion (7.9%) within the 16 to 64 NI population, while it is the largest proportion (38.0%) within the HLA steady state activity (Figure 5, Table A7).

Figure 5 Proportion of individuals on HLA steady state in academic year 2017/18 and NI (16 to 64) individuals by age group



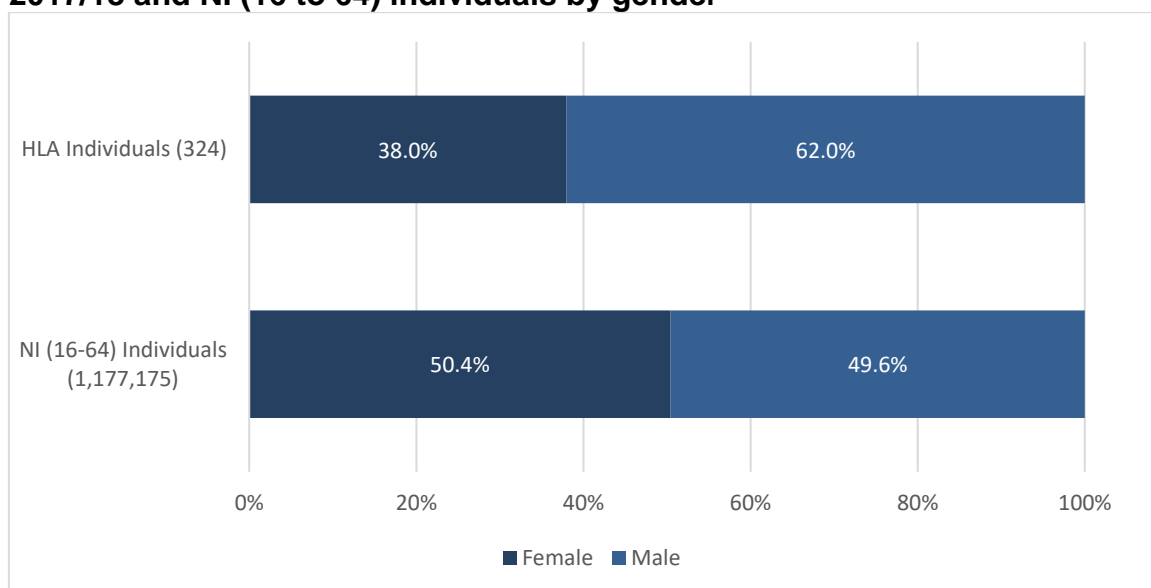
¹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2017-mid-year-population-estimates-northern-ireland>

Gender

There were nearly twice as many males (62.0%) enrolled on HLA steady state programmes as females (38.0%) in 2017/18 (Figure 6, Table A8).

The mid year ('16 to 64') NI level population estimates (2017¹) by gender indicates that there is a fairly even split between males (49.6%) and females (50.4%). The high volume of enrolments from males is mainly due to activity in traditionally male-oriented subject areas (Figure 6, Table A9).

Figure 6 Proportion of individuals on HLA steady state in academic year 2017/18 and NI (16 to 64) individuals by gender



Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Quintile

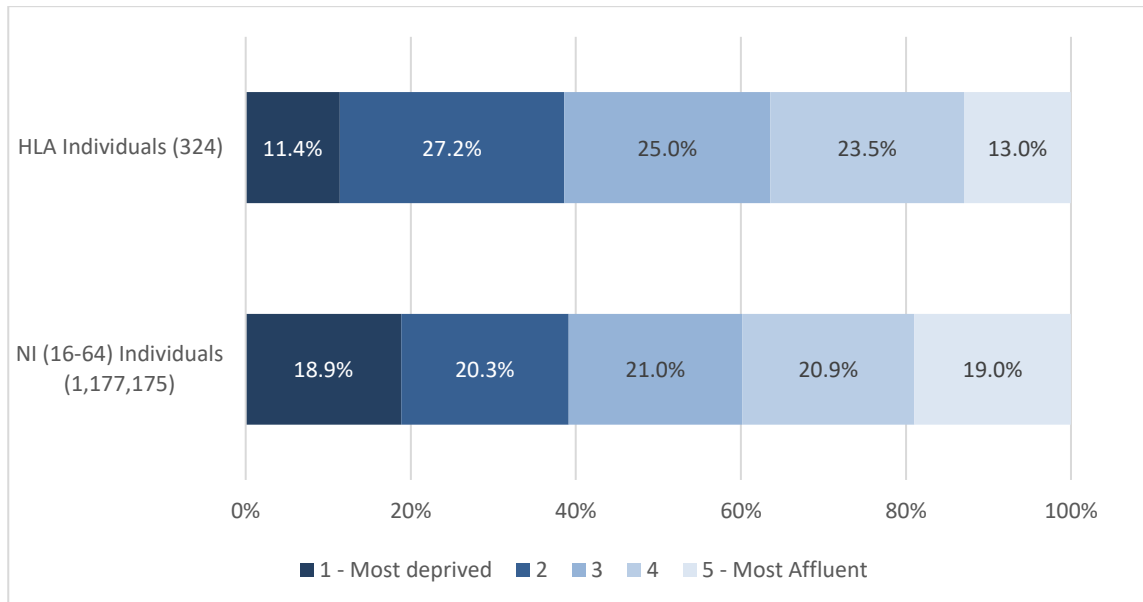
Deprivation has been measured using the official Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM, 2017²), which assesses the level of deprivation within geographical areas (Super Output Areas [SOAs]) across NI. For analysis purposes these areas are categorised into five geographical groups, termed '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' (There are no HLA steady state enrolments classed as 'Unknown' in 2017/18).

In 2017/18, nearly two fifths (38.6%) of individuals enrolled on the HLA steady state programmes were from the two most deprived quintiles, Quintile 1 and 2. Over a tenth (13.0%) of HLA individuals came from the most affluent quintile (Quintile 5), compared with 11.4% from the most deprived quintile (Quintile 1; Figure 7, Table A10).

² Please note further information on Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 is available at: [NIMDM 2017](#)

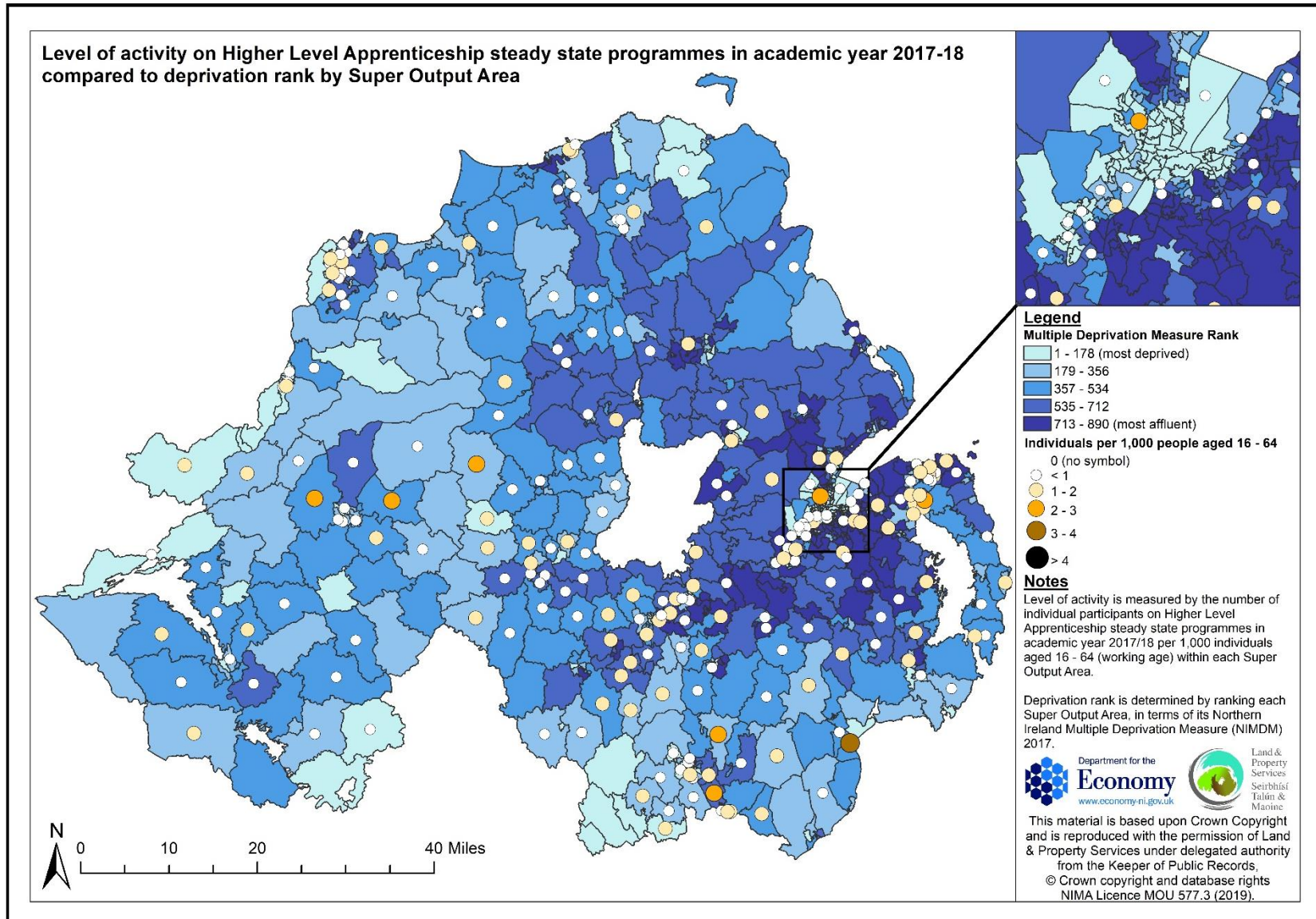
A comparison of the deprivation profile of those aged '16 to 64' in NI (based on mid-year population estimates in 2017¹) to those engaged during the HLA steady state phase in 2017/18 indicates that there were slightly fewer participants from Quintile 1 enrolled on HLA programmes (11.4%) than in the '16 to 64' population (18.9%; Figure 7, Table A11).

Figure 7 Proportion of individuals on HLA steady state in academic year 2017/18 and NI (16 to 64) individuals by NIMDM quintile



The map at Figure 8, illustrates where the individuals, enrolled on HLA steady state programmes are from (based on their postcode) compared to the varying deprivation level of the SOAs within Northern Ireland. The number of enrolments per 1,000 of the 16-64 population for each SOA in Northern Ireland was mapped on top of the quintiles of wards in terms of their NI Multiple Deprivation Measure (2017²).

Figure 8 Level of activity on HLA steady state programmes compared to deprivation rank by Super Output Area in academic year 2017/18



1.5 Course Characteristics – What is being studied?

Level of study

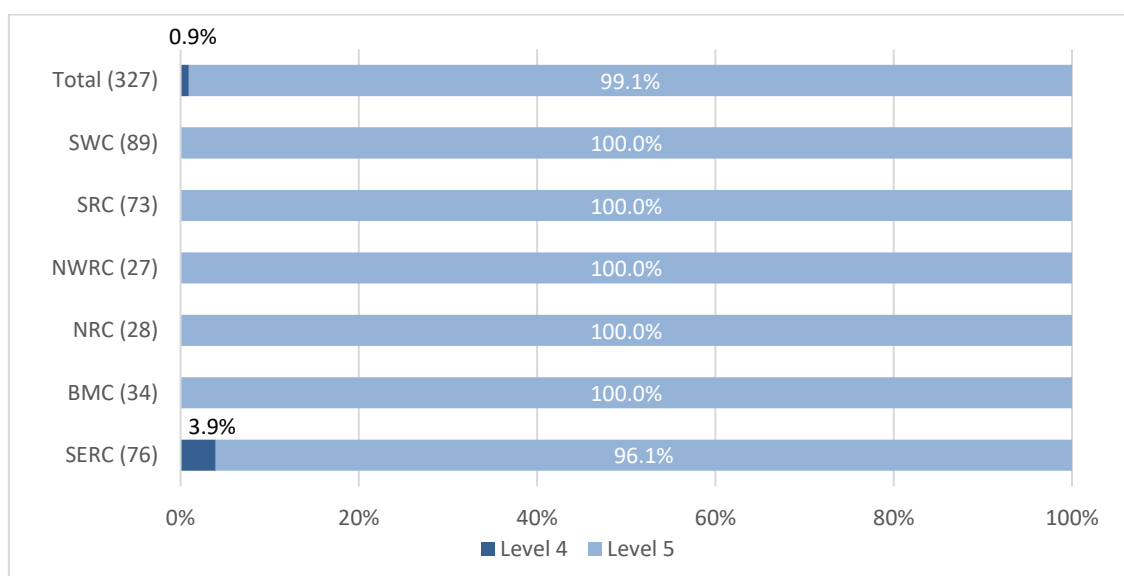
Each FE college enrolment on an HLA steady state programme has been assigned either a level 4 or a level 5. Qualifications at the same level have a similar level of demand or difficulty, for example:

- Level 4 includes Technical/Vocational Qualifications level 4, Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE).
- Level 5 includes Technical/Vocational Qualifications level 5, Higher National Diplomas (HND), Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE) and Foundation Degrees.

An individual participating in an HLA programme will have one level 4 or higher enrolment assigned as their main qualification. They may also have one or more additional enrolments at the same or lower level.

In 2017/18 nearly all (99.1%) of HLA steady state enrolments were at level 5, while the remainder (0.9%) were at level 4. Only SERC had any (3.9%) enrolments at level 4 across the FE colleges (Figure 9, Table A12).

Figure 9 Proportion of HLA steady state enrolments by level of study and FE college in academic year 2017/18



Sector Subject Area

All regulated qualifications are assigned a [Sector Subject Area \(SSA\)](#) code by the relevant 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'.

Of the 327 HLA enrolments in 2017/18, the subject area 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies' had the largest share (36.1%). This was followed by 'Business, administration and law' (28.4%; Table A13).

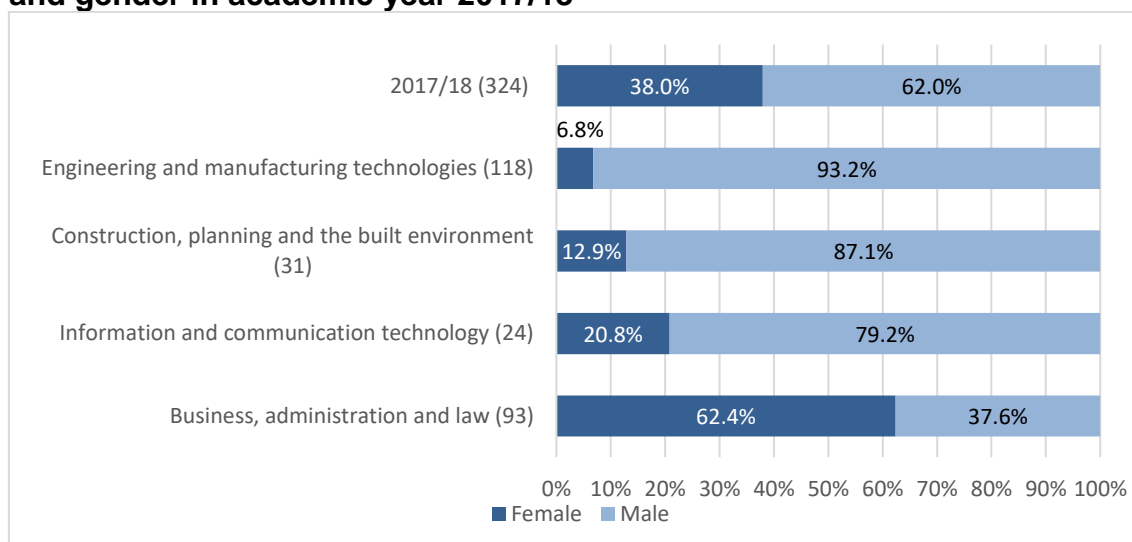
Please note if a participant is undertaking more than one course, only the SSA assigned to their core qualification (core qualifications detailed in [Annex A](#)) within their programme of study is considered in this analysis of SSA code by gender.

As demonstrated earlier (page 18), in 2017/18 HLA participants were made up of 38.0% females and 62.0% males. The gender composition within subject areas varied greatly from 62.4% females within 'Business, administration and law' to 6.8% in 'Engineering and manufacturing technologies'.

SSA by gender is only presented, in Figure 10 and accompanying tables, where there is sufficient data. Any small counts associated with a SSA have not been presented in line with disclosure control. In 2017/18, there were 58 enrolments across SSAs; 'Health, public services and care'; 'Science and Mathematics'; and 'Leisure, travel and tourism' but these are not presented by gender in this report.

There were no enrolments in academic year 2017/18 for the following SSAs: 'Agriculture, horticulture and animal care', 'Retail and commercial enterprise', 'Arts, media and publishing', 'History, philosophy and theology', 'Social sciences', 'Languages, literature and culture', 'Education and training' and 'Preparation for life and work' (Figure 10 and Table A13b).

Figure 10 Proportion of HLA steady state individuals by sector subject area and gender in academic year 2017/18



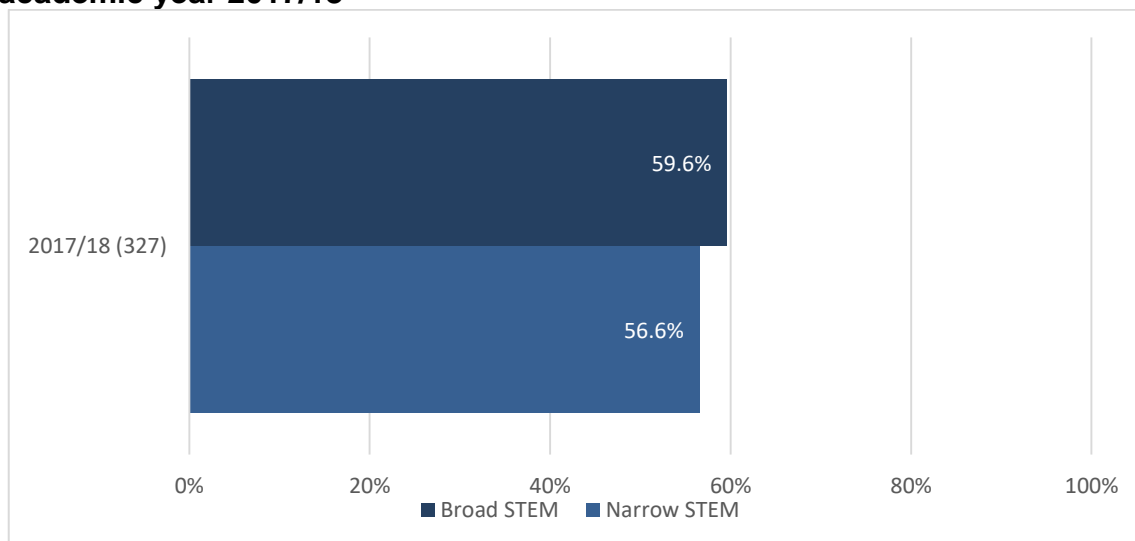
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Indicator

The '[Success through Skills – transforming futures](#)' publication highlights a need to address subject imbalances, as forecasts predict that degree subject requirements will become more skewed towards 'Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics' (STEM). The '[Report of the STEM Review](#)' examines ways in which Government and business can increase the number of people with STEM qualifications entering the workplace.

STEM or 'Broad' STEM provision is identified by subject category. 'Broad' STEM enrolments are regarded as those on courses of 'Medicine, Dentistry and Allied Subjects', 'Biological and Physical Sciences', 'Agriculture', 'Mathematics and IT', 'Engineering and Technology', and 'Architecture, Building and Planning'. A subset of this cohort is termed 'Narrow' STEM and is identified as those enrolment records within courses of 'Biological and Physical Sciences', 'Mathematics and IT', and 'Engineering and Technology'.

This section examines the level of HLA steady state enrolments within STEM subject areas. In 2017/18, enrolments identified as Broad STEM accounted for nearly three-fifths (59.6%) of all HLA steady state enrolments, while there were 56.6% in Narrow STEM subjects (Figure 11, Table A14)

Figure 11 Proportion of HLA steady state Enrolments by STEM indicator in academic year 2017/18

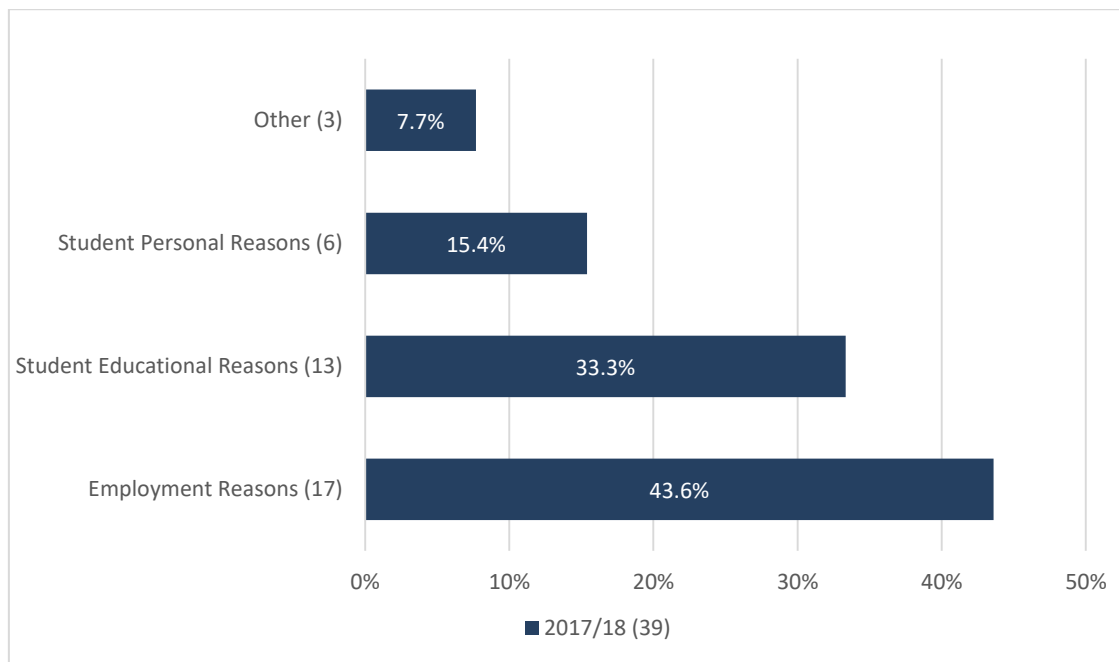


1.6 Reasons for Leaving

This section examines the known reasons for any participants leaving HLA steady state programmes within academic year 2017/18. When a student withdraws from a course delivered in an FE college, the college attempt to establish the reason for leaving. For analysis purposes in this report, the list of options are grouped into six general headings, namely 'College', 'Student Educational Reasons', 'Employment Reasons', 'Student Personal Reasons', 'Other' and 'Unknown' (Further details can be found in Annex B, point 9).

Of the 324 individuals on the HLA steady state programme there were a total of 42 (13.0%) who withdrew at some point during the academic year 2017/18. The largest proportion of leavers, where the reason is known, attribute their reason as 'employment reasons' (43.6%) followed closely by 'student educational reasons' (33.3%). Of the 42 leavers, there were three individuals where a reason was not supplied and have been excluded from analysis provided in Figure 12 below (Figure 12, Table A15).

Figure 12 Proportion of in HLA steady state leavers by grouped reason for leaving in academic year 2017/18



Annex A: Definitions

Academic Year

For Further Education (FE) information, each academic year period is defined by each FE college and potentially will differ across all six colleges. An academic year traditionally starts in August and finishes in July the following year.

Age

Within FE college data, 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 vocational qualification undertaken by the learner 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
Accounting Technicians Ireland Level 5 Diploma for Accounting Technicians
Foundation Degree in Civil Engineering
Foundation Degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
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 Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Foundation Degree in Science in Applied Industrial Sciences (Chemical Sciences)
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 International Hospitality & Tourism Management
Foundation Degree in Science in Software Development
IMI Level 5 Diploma in Automotive Management (VRQ)
LCL Level 4 Certificate in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing
NCFE CACHE Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development (Management) (Wales and Northern Ireland)

Enrolments

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

Final year enrolments

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

Funding streams

Enrolments at FE colleges can be funded through a variety of funding streams, including DfE funded provisions, such as the 'Funded Learning Unit' (FLU) or 'Government Training' programmes. These training programmes include 'Training for Success (TfS)', 'Steps to Work (StW)' and apprenticeships; TfS includes 'Programme Led Apprenticeships (PLA)', 'Skills for Life' and 'Skills for Work'. Enrolments can also be funded through non-DfE funded provision, such as 'Entitlement Framework (EF)' or 'Cost Recovery (CR)'. EF includes Discrete Special Education/Needs. CR can be either public or private. The Funding Group 'Government Training' includes these higher level apprenticeship (HLA) steady state programmes.

Further Education College

Northern Ireland's six FE colleges operate across over 40 campuses and through over 400 outreach community locations. Each college offers a number of Higher Education programmes ranging from GCSEs and A levels to BTECs, HNCs, Foundation degrees, Apprenticeships, Degrees and other specific training programmes. 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](#)

The FE colleges are the main providers of vocational and technical education and training in NI and play a central role in raising levels of literacy and numeracy and in up-skilling and re-skilling through a broad range of courses.

Please refer to the link below for further detail about FE colleges in Northern Ireland. [Contextual Information regarding the FE Sector](#)

Gender

Gender is self-reported by the individual student and can be either male or female.

Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) steady state programme

The purpose of the HLA steady state 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.

Individual

Within the FE sector figures, the number of individuals for each academic year has been determined (using Student Reference and FE college as the unique identifier) within the specific academic year period. The total number of individuals calculated over the entire time period therefore does not equal the summation of all individual academic years. This is due to the fact an individual may be enrolled in a number of academic years. The word 'participant' may be used interchangeably with 'individual' in the report.

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. Qualifications at the same level typically have a similar level of demand or difficulty. The content and size of qualifications at the same level may be quite different.

For further information on comparing qualifications across the UK, Ireland and overseas, please refer to the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Quintile 2017

The analysis presented in the publication utilises 5 groups or quintiles of super output areas (SOAs) across Northern Ireland. These 5 groups are determined based on level of relative deprivation using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM).

SOAs ranked 1 to 178 are the most deprived quintile of SOAs relative to all other SOAs. Those ranked 713 to 890 are the least deprived relative to all other SOAs.

SOA is determined using the postcode provided on the enrolment record. Some enrolments have either a non-NI address or no NI postcode has been provided. These are classified as 'Unknown' (zero HLA steady state enrolments in 2017/18).

NIMDM 2017 is a weighted combination of the seven domains of deprivation.

For further details on deprivation measurement in Northern Ireland please follow this link: [NIMDM 2017](#)

Occupancy

The volume of FE college enrolments which are marked as continuing at a particular point in the academic year.

Programme of Study

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

Reason for leaving

The reason for leaving is self-reported by the student after they withdraw from their course at an FE college.

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, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diplomas (HND), Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE) and degrees.

'Non-regulated enrolments' are those that either potentially lead to a formal qualification (at level 3 or below) that do not appear on the RRQ or do not usually lead to a formal qualification, typically hobby and leisure or recreational courses.

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. The SSA code registered against each qualification or unit has been assigned by the responsible awarding organisation. The SSAs were developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the ACCAC, the Welsh authority, along with other key educational bodies according to industry sector and academic subject area. They aim to allow more consistent reporting of data across the UK.

For non-regulated provision delivered in the FE sector, the Sector Subject Area (SSA) code is selected by the FE college from the same set of options of SSAs.

Further information on SSAs is available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+www.ofqual.gov.uk/research-and-statistics/statistics/429-sector-subject-area-classification-system-ssac>

Start date

The date on which an enrolment begins.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Within data from FE colleges, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) provision or 'Broad' STEM provision is identified by subject category. 'Broad' STEM enrolments are regarded as those on courses of 'Medicine, Dentistry and Allied Subjects', 'Biological and Physical Sciences', 'Agriculture', 'Mathematics and IT', 'Engineering and Technology', and 'Architecture, Building and Planning'. A subset of this cohort is termed 'Narrow' STEM and is identified as those enrolment records within courses of 'Biological and Physical Sciences', 'Mathematics and IT', and 'Engineering and Technology'.

Vocational qualification

Vocational qualifications are work-related qualifications. They are designed to enable the learner to acquire the knowledge, skills and competence required to perform a particular job role.

Annex B: Technical Notes

Source of information

1. The information presented in this statistical bulletin has been derived from the Consolidated Data Return (CDR), which is provided by Further Education (FE) colleges.
2. The CDR came into operation for the 2013/14 academic year and is used for analysis related to the year 2017/18. Each of the data returns are computerised data files consisting of individual records for each enrolment recorded by FE colleges during each academic year.

Diagram illustrating the information flow from student enrolment to CDR creation



Enrolment counts

3. The number of FE college enrolments is simply a count of the number of enrolment records within the relevant data return.
4. The enrolment information is correct as at 12th October 2018.
5. A student can enrol on a course for a matter of weeks (sometimes months) and then transfer to another course. Due to the original course incurring teaching hours and funding, it is included within the overall enrolment count. It is, therefore, a measurable component of enrolment activity actually delivered. The recording of transfers is also important due to particular interest in transferred students and linking this to careers guidance.

Individual counts

6. The number of individuals within FE colleges for each academic year has been determined (using Student Reference and FE college as the unique identifier) within the specific academic year period. The total number of individuals calculated over the entire time period therefore does not equal the summation of all individual academic years. This is due to the fact an individual may be enrolled in a number of academic years. The word 'participant' may be used interchangeably with 'individual' in the report.
7. Solely for the analysis of sector subject area by gender, if a participant is undertaking more than one course, only the SSA assigned to their core qualification (core qualifications detailed in [Annex A](#)) within their programme of study is considered.

Occupancy counts

8. Occupancy counts within FE colleges are determined using the start and end dates along with the student status. If a student status is set to continuing they are regarded as being 'active' on the course. The volume of 'active' participants are determined on the last Friday of each month within each academic year.

Reason for leaving

9. When a student withdraws from a course delivered in an FE college, the college attempt to establish the reason for leaving. The options in the table below are available for selection. For analysis purposes in this report, the list of options are grouped into six general headings, namely 'College', 'Student Educational Reasons', 'Employment Reasons', 'Student Personal Reasons', 'Other' and 'Unknown'.

Code	COLLEGE
C01	College terminated attendance - academic
C02	College terminated attendance - course cancelled
C03	College terminated attendance - discipline
C04	College terminated attendance - non-attendance - unable to make contact
	STUDENT EDUCATIONAL REASONS
E01	Chose a Training or Apprenticeship scheme
E02	Course no longer related to plans
E03	Course not what student thought it would be
E04	Course too demanding
E05	Disliked the course content
E06	Issue with the tutor
E07	Move to another FE college
E08	Not satisfied with the course
E09	Other course related reasons
E10	Physical difficulties in accessing classroom
E11	Returned to school
E12	Transfer to university
	EMPLOYMENT REASONS
M01	Became self employed
M02	Changed job (including position)
M03	Employer withdrew support - Financial
M04	Gone into employment
M05	Lost job
M06	Other employment related reasons
M07	Relocation - due to job
M08	To do with the employer
	STUDENT PERSONAL REASONS
P01	Death
P02	Family/Personal Issues
P03	Financial - cannot afford fees
P04	Financial - cost of transport (public and private)
P05	Health - Addictions
P06	Health - Dependents
P07	Health - Own
P08	Other personal reasons
P09	Pregnancy
P10	Relocation - family
P11	Travel difficulties
	OTHER
T01	Other
	UNKNOWN
U01	Unknown

Sector Subject Area

10. For all FE college enrolments, the Sector Subject Area (SSA) categorisation is derived from the official OFQUAL Register of Regulated Qualifications, based on the qualification or unit code. The SSA code registered against each qualification or unit has been assigned by the responsible awarding organisation. For non-regulated provision delivered in the FE sector, the Sector Subject Area (SSA) code is selected by the FE college from the same set of options of SSAs.

Section 75 categories

11. Equality related data, such as disability, religious belief and ethnicity are self-reported by the student during the data capture process within FE colleges. This information is available within the supplementary tables S2 to S7.
12. 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)
13. 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?'. This is to align to the question asked within the census for comparability. (Table S3)
14. Please note that due to incomplete responses to the political opinion questions this information is not provided within the supplementary tables.

Annex C: Quality measures

Relevance:

This Statistical Bulletin has been drafted following consultation with customers. The key customers within Government use the data to monitor performance of the steady state programme and consider operational impacts of delivering the steady state programme. There is ongoing interaction with users to ensure the data are still relevant to meet their needs.

Accuracy:

The statistics included are representative of the administrative database Northern Ireland College Information System (NICIS) at the time of data extraction. The administrative system has in-built validation checks to minimise user error and can be interrogated to assess data quality and cross check statistics. Validation checks are also carried out on the Consolidated Data Return (CDR), which contains enrolments within a given academic year. A small number of erroneous records, in terms of their source of funding, are excluded from the Higher Level Apprenticeship analysis.

Timeliness and Punctuality:

Data in this Bulletin include all participants who enrolled in the Higher Level Apprenticeship steady state programme during the academic year 2017/18. The time gap between the end of the academic year 2017/18 and the publication date is due to a lag of three months that must be left before data can be extracted from NICIS, along with time taken to complete validation and processing. The publication schedule for the Department for the Economy can be accessed via the following link: [Statistics Publication Schedule](#).

Accessibility and Clarity:

This Statistical Bulletin is first on the Higher Level Apprenticeship steady state programme published by the Department for the Economy. It is available on the Department's website and is free of charge. The Bulletin includes tables, text and charts. The Bulletin is available in other formats upon request.

Comparability:

The Bulletin provides data by academic year since the Higher Level Apprenticeship steady state programmes were introduced, in academic year 2017/18, in Northern Ireland, to enable comparisons over time. When methodological changes or other effects such as programme changes are made, every effort is made to ensure that all previous data are amended to make them directly comparable.

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request.



FURTHER ENQUIRIES

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

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