

Some headlines from A level Results Day

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The UCAS data published this morning gives a useful guide to trends in undergraduate entry to higher education – roughly 80% of the 2018 entry cohort is captured so, although it is imperfect, it is meaningful.

Numbers

For universities the *number* of students placed is key because each student brings a tuition fee income stream with them. For politicians, the *entry rates* are more critical because these show behaviour trends within the (diminishing) population.

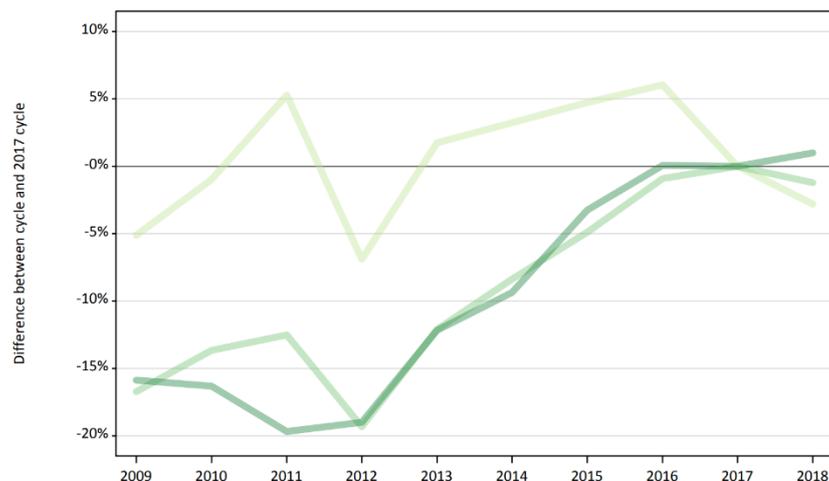
The number placed as of today is 1% down at 411,860. That's 5,000 fewer students or about £140million less income for universities over the next three years. EU and international recruitment has held up rather better than UK recruitment, mainly because of a 2.5% fall in 18 year old population in the UK this year. The population fall means over 18,000 fewer human beings finishing secondary education this year of which some 6,000 might have been expected to apply for university.

Who's losing out?

In a repeat and perhaps an amplification of last year's trends, it is the lower tariff universities that are suffering most. Lower tariff universities (think former polytechnics mainly) have 4,000 fewer confirmed students recruited this morning. Medium tariff universities are down 1,700 students while the higher tariff universities (think Russell Group mainly) have managed to increase their numbers by 1,310 against this time last year. And as the time series from UCAS below shows, higher and medium tariff universities have managed to soak up most of the growth in student numbers since the cap on recruitment started being lifted from 2012 onwards

T.1 Placed applicants from all domiciles by tariff group: A level results day
Placed applicants: change relative to 2017 cycle totals

— Lower tariff
— Medium tariff
— Higher tariff



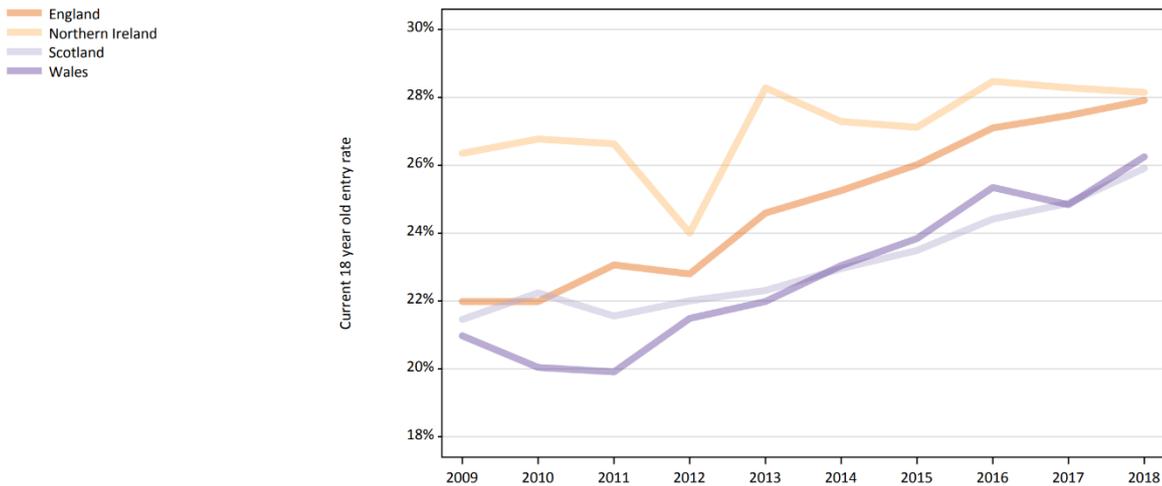
Note: The percentage change is not plotted in the above chart for groups with fewer than 30 placed applicants in any one cycle.

Daily Clearing Analysis: Tariff (00:05 on Thursday 16 August 2018). UCAS Analysis and Insights, published on Thursday 16 August 2018 at www.ucas.com

18 year old entry rates

While the number of UK students is falling, the proportion of them applying and getting into university continues to grow. On A level results day, the proportion of 18 year-olds placed had grown marginally in all UK countries except Northern Ireland. Note also the uptick in Wales perhaps due to the more generous maintenance grants now available.

C.15 Entry rates for 18 year olds by UK country of domicile: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants as a proportion of the 18 year old population



C.16 Entry rates for 18 year olds by UK country of domicile: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants as a proportion of the 18 year old population

Domicile of applicant	Age group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
England	18	22.0%	22.0%	23.1%	22.8%	24.6%	25.3%	26.0%	27.1%	27.5%	27.9%
Northern Ireland	18	26.3%	26.8%	26.6%	24.0%	28.3%	27.3%	27.1%	28.5%	28.3%	28.1%
Scotland	18	21.5%	22.2%	21.6%	22.0%	22.3%	23.0%	23.5%	24.4%	24.9%	25.9%
Wales	18	21.0%	20.0%	19.9%	21.5%	22.0%	23.0%	23.8%	25.3%	24.8%	26.3%

Disadvantaged Students

Things also look good for more disadvantaged students, measured by the serviceable but imperfect area-based POLAR4 measure. Here we see that participation rates for POLAR Quintile 1 (roughly the fifth of the population living in areas having the lowest participation rates in higher education) has again grown, up 0.3% to 16.4%. Quintile 5, from the highest participation areas, is also up by 0.7%. The most advantaged (Quintile 5) are still 2.4 times more likely to enter higher education than the least advantaged (Quintile 1).

P.5 Placed 18 year old applicants from England by POLAR4 quintile: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants: entry rate

Applicant Status	POLAR4	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Placed	Quintile 1	10.8%	10.9%	11.7%	11.8%	13.0%	14.1%	14.8%	15.7%	16.1%	16.4%
	Quintile 2	16.9%	16.6%	17.5%	17.6%	19.3%	20.2%	20.7%	21.8%	21.9%	22.3%
	Quintile 3	20.7%	21.0%	22.0%	21.8%	23.7%	24.6%	25.2%	26.1%	26.6%	26.3%
	Quintile 4	25.5%	25.5%	26.8%	25.9%	28.0%	28.4%	29.3%	30.4%	30.5%	31.1%
	Quintile 5	34.2%	34.2%	35.5%	34.8%	36.7%	36.8%	37.6%	38.6%	38.9%	39.6%

P.6 Placed 18 year old applicants from England by POLAR4 quintile: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants: entry rate (indexed to 100 = Quintile 1)

Applicant Status	POLAR4	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Placed	Quintile 1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Quintile 2	156	153	150	149	148	144	140	139	136	136
	Quintile 3	191	192	188	185	182	174	170	166	165	160
	Quintile 4	235	234	230	220	216	202	197	194	190	189
	Quintile 5	316	313	304	295	283	261	254	246	242	241

Men and Women

Men continue to lose out in higher education. Across UK, EU and international, 61,380 fewer men have been placed in UK universities. For home-based 18-year olds the gap is 26,850 making young women nearly 40% more likely to participate in higher education than young men.

S.14 Placed 18 year old applicants from the UK by sex: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants: entry rate

Applicant Status	Sex	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Placed	Men	18.7%	19.1%	19.8%	19.2%	20.8%	21.3%	21.6%	22.6%	22.9%	23.4%
	Women	25.5%	25.1%	26.1%	26.4%	28.1%	29.0%	30.1%	31.3%	31.7%	32.2%
	All	22.0%	22.1%	22.9%	22.7%	24.4%	25.0%	25.7%	26.8%	27.2%	27.7%

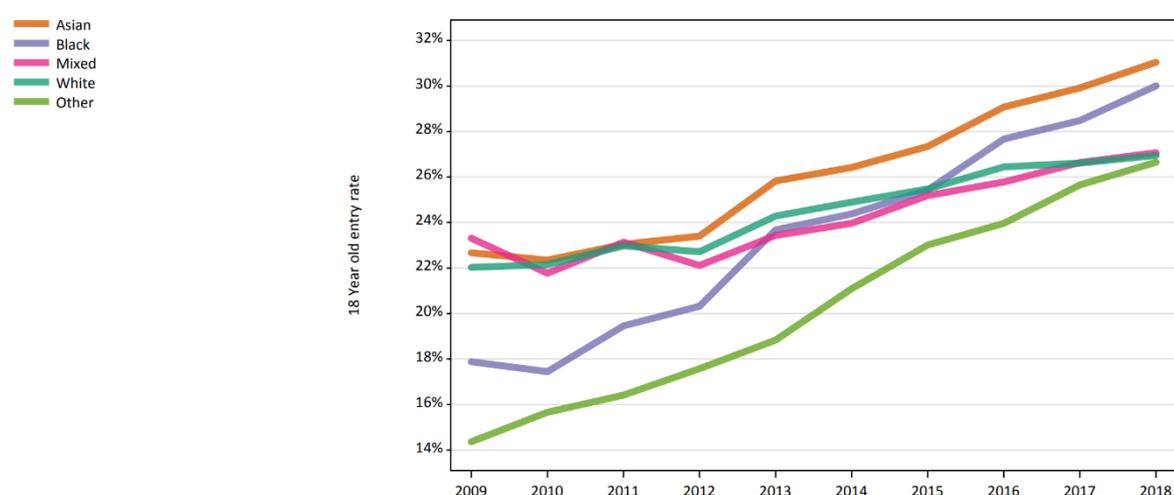
S.15 Placed 18 year old applicants from the UK by sex: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants: entry rate (indexed to 100 = Men)

Applicant Status	Sex	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Placed	Men	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Women	136	131	132	137	135	137	139	138	139	138

Ethnicity

Although white students are still the largest group of undergraduate students, BAME students have a higher and faster growing appetite for higher education. Today's data from UCAS indicate that while the number of placed white students from the UK is down 3%, placed BAME students are up 1%. The entry rate by ethnic group is the lowest for the White group and Asian students are 15% more likely to enter higher education.

E.7 Placed 18 year old applicants from UK by ethnic group: A level results day
Placed 18 year old applicants: entry rate



Note

All data are from UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/statistical-releases-daily-clearing-analysis-2018>

These are not final rates as the data on A level results day typically represents only about 80% of the End of Cycle data.