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PARTICIPATION RATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: ACADEMIC YEARS 1999/2000 - 2006/2007 (Provisional)

INTRODUCTION

1. This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides a historic time series of initial participation rates for 17-30 year old English domiciled first-time participants in Higher Education since 1999/2000.

KEY POINTS

2. The provisional figure for the HEIPR for 2006/07 was 40%, down from the final figure for 2005/06 of 42%. The figure for 2005/06 was up from 40% in 2004/05.
3. The provisional figure for males for 2006/07 was 35%, down from the final figure for 2005/06 of 37%. The figure for 2005/06 was up from 35% in 2004/05.
4. For females, the provisional figure for 2006/07 was 45%, down from the final figure for 2005/06 of 48%. The figure for 2005/06 was up from 45% in 2004/05.
5. The provisional figure for full-time students in 2006/07 was 34%, down from the final figure for 2005/06 of 37%. The figure for 2005/06 was up from 34% in 2004/05.
6. The provisional figure for part-time students was 6% in 2006/07, no change from the final figure for 2005/06 or 2004/05.
7. The provisional figures for 2006/07 on the age specific initial participation rates for males and females show that participation rates for females were higher than those for males for all ages from 17 to 30.

8. Figures for the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) are rounded to the nearest whole number to reflect the degree of accuracy inherent in the data. As this can conceal changes or trends, figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are also provided in the tables to inform comparisons over time.
9. The figures in this SFR supersede figures released earlier as they have been updated with revised data from all sources.

TABLES

Table 1 Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) for English domiciled first time participants in Higher Education Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions and English, Welsh and Scottish Further Education Colleges: 1999/00 – 2006/07

Academic Year	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 (Provisional)
HEIPR (male and female) %	39 (39.2)	40 (39.6)	40 (40.2)	41 (41.1)	40 (40.2)	40 (40.1)	42 (42.5)	40 (39.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	238	238	244	255	257	261	281	269
HEIPR (male) %	37 (37.1)	37 (36.8)	36 (36.5)	37 (36.9)	35 (35.3)	35 (35.4)	37 (37.4)	35 (34.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	113	112	112	117	116	118	127	121
HEIPR (female) %	41 (41.4)	43 (42.8)	44 (44.1)	46 (45.6)	45 (45.3)	45 (45.0)	48 (47.8)	45 (44.9)
Initial entrants (thousands)	125	128	131	138	141	143	155	148
HEIPR (full- time) %	34 (33.6)	34 (34.4)	35 (35.1)	36 (35.6)	35 (34.5)	34 (34.4)	37 (36.6)	34 (33.9)
Initial entrants (thousands)	202	205	211	220	222	224	243	230
HEIPR (part-time) %	6 (5.6)	5 (5.2)	5 (5.2)	6 (5.5)	6 (5.6)	6 (5.7)	6 (5.9)	6 (5.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	36	33	33	35	36	37	39	39

Figures for the HEIPR are rounded to the nearest whole number to reflect the degree of accuracy inherent in the data. As this can conceal changes or trends, figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are also provided to inform comparisons over time. Figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are shown in parentheses. Figures for the counts of initial entrants are rounded to the nearest thousand. Rounding may result in apparent inconsistencies between totals and sums of constituent parts.

**Table 2 Higher Education Initial Participation Rates by Age
2006/2007 (provisional)**

Age	Initial Entrants	Population	Initial Participation Rate (%)
17	1,980	664,100	0.3%
18	137,625	681,700	20.2%
19	58,170	676,400	8.6%
20	16,815	675,700	2.5%
21	9,470	694,400	1.4%
22	6,690	684,400	1.0%
23	5,880	677,200	0.9%
24	5,405	667,300	0.8%
25	5,515	686,300	0.8%
26	5,330	691,900	0.8%
27	4,790	666,900	0.7%
28	4,165	630,800	0.7%
29	3,905	625,700	0.6%
30	3,740	640,600	0.6%
17 - 30 (Overall)	269,490		39.8%

The HEIPR is defined as the sum of the initial participation rates by age over ages 17-30. It has been rounded to one decimal place, the initial participation rates by age have been rounded to one decimal place, the counts of the initial entrants have been rounded to the nearest 5 and the counts of the relevant population have been rounded to the nearest 100. Rounding may result in apparent inconsistencies between totals and sums of constituent parts.

**Table 3 Higher Education Initial Participation Rates by Gender and Age
2006/2007 (provisional)**

Age	Males			Females		
	Initial Entrants	Population	HEIPR (%)	Initial Entrants	Population	HEIPR (%)
17	750	342,100	0.2%	1,235	322,000	0.4%
18	61,515	351,900	17.5%	76,110	329,800	23.1%
19	28,270	349,700	8.1%	29,915	326,700	9.2%
20	8,410	345,100	2.4%	8,410	330,600	2.5%
21	4,505	355,300	1.3%	4,965	339,100	1.5%
22	2,945	350,800	0.8%	3,750	333,600	1.1%
23	2,400	345,200	0.7%	3,480	332,000	1.0%
24	2,150	334,500	0.6%	3,255	332,800	1.0%
25	2,125	344,200	0.6%	3,385	342,100	1.0%
26	2,070	347,100	0.6%	3,260	344,900	0.9%
27	1,865	332,800	0.6%	2,925	334,200	0.9%
28	1,565	314,700	0.5%	2,600	316,100	0.8%
29	1,500	313,600	0.5%	2,400	312,100	0.8%
30	1,350	321,300	0.4%	2,390	319,300	0.7%
17-30 (Overall)	121,410		34.8%	148,085		44.9%

The HEIPR is defined as the sum of the initial participation rates by age over ages 17-30. It has been rounded to one decimal place, the initial participation rates by age have been rounded to one decimal place, the counts of the initial entrants have been rounded to the nearest 5 and the counts of the relevant population have been rounded to the nearest 100. Rounding may result in apparent inconsistencies between totals and sums of constituent parts.

NOTES TO EDITORS

10. The HEIPR is the National Statistic that the Government uses to measure progress in participation in relation to the Spending Review 2004 Public Service Agreement target: “by 2010, increase participation in higher education towards 50% of those aged 18 to 30 and also make significant progress year on year towards fair access, and bear down on rates of non-completion.” It will also be used to measure progress in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 target to “increase participation in Higher Education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18 to 30 with growth of at least a percentage point every two years to the academic year 2010-11,” which forms part of the Public Service Agreement to “improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020.”
11. The HEIPR roughly equates to the probability that a seventeen year old will participate in higher education by age thirty given the age specific participation rates.
12. In November 2002, the Department for Education and Skills commissioned a National Statistics Quality Review of Higher Education participation statistics. The review was carried out independently by Professor Ramsden in accordance with Office for National Statistics guidelines and was designed to ensure rigour and transparency. The report on the review was published in July 2003 and is available on the Office for National Statistics website, at:
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/quality_review/education.asp. The report recommended that the HEIPR be a measure of initial participation in higher education.
13. In August 2004, the Department for Education and Skills commissioned a further review to assess the feasibility of disaggregating the HEIPR by ethnicity, disability, social class and region. This review was also carried out by Professor Ramsden. The report on this review was published in August 2005 and is available at:
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectId=14567&keyword=&type=5&resultspage=61>
14. In December 2006, the National Audit Office published a review of the data systems underpinning target measurement in a number of Government Departments. The HEIPR methodology was reviewed as part of this process. The report is available on the National Audit Office website, at:
http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/06-07/0607127ii.pdf

15. The methodology for calculating the HEIPR was revised in 2007, in line with recommendations set out in the National Statistics Quality Review and the recent National Audit Office review. The details of the revisions and their impact on the HEIPR time series were reported in Statistical First Release 8/2007, "Methodological Revisions to the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR)", which is available at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000714/SFR08-2007.pdf>
16. Professor Ramsden has recently drafted a report on Non-traditional Routes into Higher Education, which includes an estimate of 4,500 English domiciled initial entrants to higher education studying wholly overseas in 2004. In the context of the latest figure for the HEIPR, 39.8% in 2006/07 based on 269,000 English domiciled initial entrants to higher education in the UK, 4,500 additional English domiciled entrants would equate to an increase in initial entrants of 1.7% and could potentially add roughly up to 0.7 percentage points to the HEIPR. Professor Ramsden concludes that it is not possible on the basis of available data to disaggregate these students by age and therefore to include them in the HEIPR calculation: however they should not be disregarded.
17. The same report suggested that some 900 entrants to private higher education institutions might appropriately be counted within the HEIPR. 900 additional entrants would equate to an increase in initial entrants of 0.3% and could potentially add roughly up to 0.1 percentage points to the HEIPR. Again, it is not possible to disaggregate these students by age and therefore to include them in the HEIPR calculation, but they should not be disregarded.
18. The Annex contains supplementary tables as follows:
- **Supplementary Table A:** Higher Education Initial Participation Rate for 17-20 year olds (HEIPR20) for English domiciled first time participants in Higher Education Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions and English, Welsh and Scottish Further Education Colleges 1999/00 – 2006/07.
 - **Supplementary Table B:** Higher Education Initial Participation Rate for 17-60 year olds (HEIPR60) for English domiciled first time participants in Higher Education Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions and English, Welsh and Scottish Further Education Colleges 1999/00 – 2006/07.
 - **Supplementary Table C:** Postgraduate Initial Participation Rate (PGIPR) for English domiciled 17-30 year old first time participants in Postgraduate Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions 1999/00 – 2006/07.

19. The figures in these tables have been derived using similar methods to the HEIPR. Note that in this terminology the HEIPR30 is the HEIPR itself. The figures for the HEIPR20 are the sums of the age specific initial participation rates for 17 to 20 year olds and are at least as robust as the figures for the HEIPR itself. The figures for the HEIPR60 are the sums of the age specific participation rates for 17 to 60 year olds and are not as robust as the figures for the HEIPR itself because it is not possible to check as thoroughly whether participants aged 31 to 60 are initial participants.

DEFINITIONS

20. The figures in this SFR were derived from data on Higher Education students collected from publicly funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the United Kingdom and for the first time in 2004/05 from the University of Buckingham by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and from Further Education Colleges (FECs) in England by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), in Wales by the National Assembly for Wales, and in Scotland by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Population estimates were provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and population projections by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD), both of which have been converted to an academic year basis by DCSF.

21. The HEIPR counts English-domiciled 17-30 year old Higher Education students. Students are counted if they participate for at least six months on a course expected to last for at least six months, except that students are not counted if they have participated in Higher Education previously for at least six months. Students at FECs in England, Scotland and Wales are counted if they are on courses designated as National Vocational Qualification Level 4 or above, or listed as Higher Education.

22. The HEIPR does not count English domiciled Higher Education students (as defined above):

- at FECs in Northern Ireland;
- at privately funded institutions, with the exception of the University of Buckingham from 2004/05 (which makes no practical difference to the figures because of its relatively small number of English-domiciled students aged 17-30);
- at institutions outside the UK.

Information on these students is not currently available to the Department in sufficient detail to be included in the calculations.

23. The HEIPR includes students studying via both Full-time (FT) and Part-time (PT) modes. FT study is defined by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as attendance at an institution for

periods amounting to at least 24 weeks per year, with learning activity amounting to an average of at least 21 hours per week. The PT mode refers to study which is less intensive than this definition. There is no lower limit on the intensity of PT courses for inclusion in the HEIPR.

24. The HEIPR depends on the “entry code” and “new entrant to HE” fields in the HESA and LSC data respectively. This field determines whether a student is recorded as “New to HE”, “Not new to HE” or “Unknown prior HE”. HEFCE have determined that the field is not entirely accurate and have developed algorithms to correct for students on the HESA Student Record and the LSC Individualised Learner Record declaring themselves as “New to HE” when they actually have prior HE experience. HEFCE have provided DIUS with the results of the algorithms that identify and remove any such entrants who have experience of initial study in previous years. Students who do not have records in previous years, but who have “Unknown prior HE”, qualify for the HEIPR on a pro-rata basis in relation to those with known background.

REVISIONS

25. Due to recent revisions to the population estimates for 2002 onwards by the Office for National Statistics, the time series has been revised with updated population figures. This has had the effect of slightly reducing figures for 2001/02 onwards.
26. Following an internal quality assurance process within HEFCE, the files provided to identify and remove students with prior experience of higher education have been corrected. This has had a slight effect on the whole time series, but it has particularly affected the 2004/05 figure. This figure has also been revised using final data for Higher Education students at FECs.
27. Updates to the underlying data:
As revisions and updates to the source data from HESA, LSC, SFC, the National Assembly for Wales and the population estimates and projections from ONS and GAD are made available at different times during the year, any revisions to the provisional figures for 2006/07 will be published as soon as the provisional figures for 2007/08 are available. The Department is planning to publish the provisional figures for 2007/08 in March 2009.

ANNEX

Supplementary Table A: Higher Education Initial Participation Rate for 17-20 year olds (HEIPR20) for English domiciled first time participants in Higher Education Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions and English, Welsh and Scottish Further Education Colleges 1999/00 – 2006/07

Academic Year	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 (Provisional)
HEIPR20 (male and female) %	31 (31.3)	32 (31.9)	32 (32.5)	33 (32.7)	32 (31.7)	32 (31.7)	34 (33.9)	32 (31.6)
Initial entrants (thousands)	188	189	194	201	204	207	225	215
HEIPR20 (male) %	30 (29.7)	30 (29.9)	30 (29.9)	30 (29.7)	28 (28.4)	28 (28.5)	30 (30.5)	28 (28.2)
Initial entrants (thousands)	90	90	91	94	94	96	104	99
HEIPR20 (female) %	33 (32.9)	34 (34.1)	35 (35.2)	36 (35.9)	35 (35.4)	35 (35.0)	38 (37.5)	35 (35.2)
Initial entrants (thousands)	98	100	103	107	110	111	121	116
HEIPR20 (full-time) %	30 (29.9)	31 (30.6)	31 (31.1)	31 (31.3)	30 (30.4)	30 (30.3)	32 (32.4)	30 (30.1)
Initial entrants (thousands)	179	181	186	193	195	198	216	204
HEIPR20 (part-time) %	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.5)	2 (1.5)
Initial entrants (thousands)	9	8	8	8	9	9	10	10

Figures for the HEIPR20 are rounded to the nearest whole number to reflect the degree of accuracy inherent in the data. As this can conceal changes or trends, figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are also provided to inform comparisons over time. Figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are shown in parentheses. Figures for the counts of initial entrants are rounded to the nearest thousand. Rounding may result in apparent inconsistencies between totals and sums of constituent parts.

Supplementary Table B: Higher Education Initial Participation Rate for 17-60 year olds (HEIPR60) for English domiciled first time participants in Higher Education Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions and English, Welsh and Scottish Further Education Colleges 1999/00 – 2006/07

Academic Year	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 (Provisional)
HEIPR60 (male and female) %	48 (48.1)	48 (48.2)	49 (49.3)	51 (50.6)	50 (49.6)	49 (49.5)	52 (52.1)	49 (48.7)
Initial entrants (thousands)	302	300	309	324	326	329	351	334
HEIPR60 (male) %	44 (44.1)	43 (43.2)	43 (43.1)	44 (43.6)	42 (41.8)	42 (42.1)	44 (44.2)	41 (41.3)
Initial entrants (thousands)	138	135	136	141	140	142	151	144
HEIPR60 (female) %	52 (52.1)	53 (53.2)	56 (55.6)	58 (57.9)	57 (57.5)	57 (57.1)	60 (60.1)	56 (56.4)
Initial entrants (thousands)	164	165	173	182	186	187	200	190
HEIPR60 (full-time) %	35 (35.4)	36 (36.2)	37 (37.1)	38 (37.7)	37 (36.7)	37 (36.5)	39 (38.7)	36 (35.9)
Initial entrants (thousands)	215	219	226	236	238	240	259	245
HEIPR60 (part-time) %	13 (12.7)	12 (11.9)	12 (12.2)	13 (12.9)	13 (12.8)	13 (13.0)	13 (13.4)	13 (12.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	86	81	83	88	88	89	93	89

Figures for the HEIPR60 are rounded to the nearest whole number to reflect the degree of accuracy inherent in the data. As this can conceal changes or trends, figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are also provided to inform comparisons over time. Figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are shown in parentheses. Figures for the counts of initial entrants are rounded to the nearest thousand. Rounding may result in apparent inconsistencies between totals and sums of constituent parts.

Supplementary Table C: Postgraduate Initial Participation Rate (PGIPR) for English domiciled 17-30 year old first time participants in Postgraduate Courses at UK Higher Education Institutions 1999/00 – 2006/07

Academic Year	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 (Provisional)
PGIPR (male and female) %	8 (8.1)	8 (8.2)	9 (8.6)	9 (9.1)	9 (9.3)	9 (9.0)	9 (8.9)	9 (8.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	50	51	54	57	59	58	58	59
PGIPR (male) %	7 (7.0)	7 (6.8)	7 (7.0)	7 (7.3)	7 (7.4)	7 (7.0)	7 (6.9)	7 (6.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	22	21	22	23	23	23	23	23
PGIPR (female) %	9 (9.3)	10 (9.7)	10 (10.3)	11 (10.9)	11 (11.1)	11 (11.0)	11 (10.9)	11 (10.8)
Initial entrants (thousands)	29	30	32	34	35	35	35	36
PGIPR (full-time) %	5 (5.4)	6 (5.6)	6 (5.8)	6 (6.2)	6 (6.3)	6 (6.1)	6 (6.0)	6 (5.9)
Initial entrants (thousands)	32	34	36	39	40	39	40	40
PGIPR (part-time) %	3 (2.7)	3 (2.7)	3 (2.8)	3 (2.9)	3 (2.9)	3 (2.9)	3 (2.9)	3 (2.9)
Initial entrants (thousands)	18	17	18	18	19	18	19	19

Figures for the PGIPR are rounded to the nearest whole number to reflect the degree of accuracy inherent in the data. As this can conceal changes or trends, figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are also provided to inform comparisons over time. Figures rounded to the nearest decimal place are shown in parentheses. Figures for the counts of initial entrants are rounded to the nearest thousand. Rounding may result in apparent inconsistencies between totals and sums of constituent parts.

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