



Department
for Education

Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom: 2015

Country Information and Data Sources

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Country Information and Data Sources

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Education Systems in the UK

Across the UK there are five stages of education: early years; primary; secondary; Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). Education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16. In England, young people must also do one of the following until they are 18: stay in full-time education; start an apprenticeship or traineeship; work or volunteer while in part-time education or training. FE is not compulsory and covers non-advanced education which can be taken at further (including tertiary) education colleges and HE institutions (HEIs). The fifth stage, HE, is study beyond A levels and their equivalent which, for most full-time students, takes place in universities and other HEIs and colleges.

Early Years Education

1. In England since 2010, all three and four year-olds are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year. Early Years education takes place in a variety of settings including state nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes within primary schools, as well as settings outside the state sector such as voluntary pre-schools, privately run nurseries and childminders. In recent years there has been a major expansion of Early Years education and childcare. The Foundation Stage was first introduced in 2000, and covered children's education from the age of 3 to the end of the reception year, when children are aged 5. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) came into force in 2008, and is a single regulatory and quality framework for the provision of learning, development and care for children in all registered early years settings between birth and the academic year in which they turn 5. The statutory EYFS framework requires the EYFS profile assessment to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5, and no later than 30 June in that term.
2. In Wales, children are entitled to a free part-time place from the term following a child's third birthday until they enter statutory education. These places can be in a maintained school or a non-maintained setting such as a voluntary playgroup, private nursery or childminder which is approved to provide education. The Foundation Phase is a holistic developmental curriculum for 3 to 7-year-olds based on the needs of the individual child to meet their stage of development. Statutory rollout of the Foundation Phase framework started in 2008 and the process was completed in the 2011/12 school year.
3. The commitment in the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government is to 'ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it.' Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and units and in those voluntary and private settings participating in the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP). Places in the voluntary/private sector are part-time whilst, in the statutory nursery sector, both full-time and part-time places are available. Pre-school education is designed for children in the year immediately before they enter Primary 1. Taking into account the starting age for compulsory education in Northern Ireland this means children are aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 2 months in the September in which they enter their final pre-school year. The Programme incorporates a number of features designed to promote high quality pre-school education provision in all

settings including a curriculum which is common to all those involved in pre-school education.

4. In Scotland, nationally funded learning provision typically starts with early learning and childcare. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 has increased the amount of funded early learning and childcare to 600 hours a year for all 3 and 4 year-olds, and extended this provision to over a quarter of all 2 year-olds. This includes those 2 year-olds who are, or have been at any point since their 2nd birthday, looked after by the local authority, under a kinship care or guardianship order; those with a parent in receipt of out of work benefits (as defined by the Department for Work and Pensions) and those who meet the Free School Lunch criteria.
5. Local authorities have a duty to secure a part-time funded place for every eligible child starting. Broadly speaking, for eligible 2 year-olds the funded entitlement starts from the beginning of the school term after their second birthday, or the school term after their parent starts receiving a qualifying benefit; and, for 3 year-olds, from the beginning of the school term after the child's third birthday. Early learning and childcare can be provided by local authority centres, or private and voluntary providers under a partnership arrangement.
6. As the current statutory starting age for early learning and childcare is the first term after the 3rd birthday, this broadly means children have access to a different number of terms of early learning and childcare depending on when their birthday falls. For the youngest children in the cohort (born in January and February), who would stand to receive the least amount of terms, parents can also choose to defer entry to primary school, and local authorities are required to provide an additional year of early learning and childcare. For children with birthdays between September and December, parents may request a deferment but it is at the discretion of local authorities to reach a decision on a case by case basis. If the local authority agrees that deferred entry to primary school is in the best interests of the child, they have a discretionary power to provide an additional year of funded early learning and childcare. If the local authority does not agree that a deferment is in the best interest of the child, a parent can still choose to defer their entry to primary school, however they will not receive additional funded early learning and childcare.

Primary Education

7. In England, all schools are legally required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, and all maintained schools must teach the national curriculum for 5-16 year-olds.
8. The primary stage covers three age ranges: nursery (under 5), infant (5 to 7 or 8) (key stage 1) and junior (up to 11 or 12) (key stage 2). In Northern Ireland the statutory curriculum is split across 3 stages: Foundation Stage (the first two years of primary school, ages 4-6), KS1 (6 to 8) and KS2 (9 to 11). In Wales, although the types of school are the same, the Foundation Phase has brought together what was previously known as the Early Years (from 3 to 5-year-olds) and key stage 1 (from 5 to 7-year-olds) of the national curriculum to create one phase of education for children aged between three and seven. In Scotland, learning in primary schools (ages 5-11 in general) is part of the broad

general education phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), a coherent curriculum from 3-18. In England, primary schools generally cater for 4-11 year-olds. Some primary schools may have a nursery or a children's centre attached to cater for younger children. Most public sector primary schools take both boys and girls in mixed classes. It is usual to transfer straight to secondary school at age 11 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland or 12 in Scotland, but in England some children make the transition via middle schools catering for various age ranges between 8 and 14. Depending on their individual age ranges middle schools are classified as either primary or secondary. In England, the first primary academies (publicly funded state schools that are independent of local authorities) opened in 2010. In Wales, middle schools are a separate sector as they have pupils from nursery to the end of secondary years.

9. The major goals of primary education are achieving basic literacy and numeracy amongst all pupils, as well as establishing foundations in science, mathematics and other subjects. Children in England and Northern Ireland are assessed at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. In Wales, all learners in their final year of Foundation Phase and key stage 2 must be assessed through teacher assessment and National Reading and Numeracy Tests track the progress of pupils from the end of the Foundation Phase right the way through into secondary education. The tests are designed to give teachers a clearer insight into a learner's development and progress. This allows them to identify strengths and areas for improvement and to intervene at an earlier stage if learners are falling behind. In Scotland, primary features learning across 8 curriculum areas, as well as a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and health and wellbeing. Teachers will use a range of assessment methods to monitor learners' progress, and a pupil profile will be produced at P7 offering a summary statement of a learner's best achievements, skills and knowledge.

Secondary Education

10. In England, public provision of secondary education in an area may consist of a combination of different types of school, the pattern reflecting historical circumstance and the policy adopted by the local authority. Comprehensive schools largely admit pupils without reference to ability or aptitude and cater for all the children in a neighbourhood, but in some areas they co-exist with other types of schools, for example grammar schools. Academies, operating in England, are publicly funded independent schools. Academies have greater freedoms to innovate and raise standards. These include freedom from local authority control, the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff, freedom around the delivery of the curriculum and the ability to change the lengths of terms and school days. The first academies opened in 2002 with the objective of replacing poorly performing schools. Academies were established and driven by external sponsors, to achieve a transformation in education performance. The academies programme was expanded from 2010 to enable all maintained primary, secondary and special schools to apply to become an academy. Schools that are performing well are able to become academies without a sponsor, and are expected to work with underperforming schools to help raise standards. Other schools can become academies if they join an academy trust with an excellent school or an education partner with a strong record of improvement.

11. Free schools were introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition as an extension of the academies programme making it possible for parents, teachers, charities and businesses to set up their new schools provided there is demand from parents for them to do so. The first free schools opened in 2011 and about a third are secondary schools.
12. University technical colleges are 14-19 institutions that provide a technical education alongside GCSEs. They are employer and university led and these sponsors design the curriculum and specialisms, provide mentoring and working experience opportunities to equip the students with the skills that employers demand.
13. Studio schools also offer academic and vocational qualifications which are taught in a practical and project-based way. Study is combined with work placements with local and national employers who are involved in the school. The distinction between studio schools and other 14-19 provision is that they have a strong emphasis on practical work and enterprise. Though studio schools may have a 'specialism', they will focus mainly on equipping students with a wide range of employability skills and a core of academic qualifications.
14. In Wales, secondary schools take pupils at 11 years old until statutory school age and beyond. Secondary education is also provided in middle schools and some special schools, Pupil Referral Units and Independent schools. All are maintained by the local authorities with the exception of Independent schools.
15. In Northern Ireland, post-primary education consists of five compulsory years and two further years if students wish to remain in school to pursue post GCSE / Level 2 courses to Level 3. The statutory curriculum runs until a pupil has completed the compulsory years of education and is split across two key stages (Key Stage 3 and 4) year. In Key Stage 4, children are entitled to access to at least 24 courses, of which at least one third must be general subjects, and one third applied subjects; courses may be offered in the child's own school or may be accessed in another school or FE college. Ministerial policy is that transfer from primary school should be on the basis of non-academic criteria; however some post-primary schools can still legally admit pupils based on academic performance.
16. Education authority secondary schools in Scotland are comprehensive in character and offer six years of secondary education, with compulsory age being 16 (S4); however, in some remote areas there are several schools which cover only some of these six years, with primary provision also sometimes offered within the same establishment. The broad general education phase of CfE is up to the end of S3, providing a strong grounding for a move to study for qualifications in the senior phase (S4-S6). A second pupil profile is produced at the end of S3.
17. At the end of this stage of education, pupils are normally entered for a range of external examinations. Most frequently, these are GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland pupils study for their National Qualifications (NQ), typically at SCQF level 3 to 5, in the fourth year of secondary school. NQ Higher grade (SCQF level 6), requires at least a further year of secondary

schooling. Scotland's qualifications system is undergoing a period of change. The new National 1 to National 5 qualifications were introduced in Scottish schools in (2013/14). Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications will be retained and refreshed. The new Higher was introduced in 2014/15 and the new Advanced Higher will be available in 2015/16.

18. Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) level qualifications are the traditional academic qualifications offered by schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Many students take AS and A level qualifications in years 12 and 13 (years 13 and 14 in Northern Ireland) after completing their GCSEs, though adults can take them too. Students can choose from a wide range of academic subjects, as well as some work-related subjects. The primary purpose of A levels is to prepare students for degree-level study; over 80% of students with 2 or more A levels go on to higher education. The A level normally takes two years to complete full-time, although they're also available to study part-time.
19. A levels offered by Awarding Organisations in Wales and Northern Ireland are made up of the AS level and the A2. The AS level is taken at the end of the first year of an A level course and can be either a free standing qualification in its own right, or make up the first 40% of a full A level. At the end of the AS year, students can choose to continue to the second year to complete the full A level or not. In year two of a full A level, students take the A2 which is designed to deepen the knowledge gained during the AS level. In England, from September 2015 the AS level has been entirely decoupled from the A level and is a free standing qualification in its own right. Students can choose to enter the AS but it will not contribute to the full A level or students can enter the full A level.
20. In future, A levels offered by English Awarding Organisations will be fully linear with all assessment at the end of two years. Universities will also lead a review of A levels to ensure that the qualification provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to begin undergraduate study.
21. The first new linear A levels were available in schools for first teaching in September 2015. A levels requiring more substantial changes and input from universities are also available in schools ready for first teaching in September 2016 with the majority of the remaining subjects to be available for first teaching from September 2017.
22. In Wales pupils may take A levels or other level 3 qualifications in a number of different types of educational setting e.g. school sixth forms, further education colleges, adult and community education centre or through work based learning. The data for Wales only includes school sixth forms.
23. In Scotland pupils tend to study Highers (SCQF level 6) in their fifth year at secondary school, and in sixth year they may study more Highers and/or Advanced Highers (SCQF level 7). They are aimed at those who have passed courses at SCQF level 5 (Standard Grade Credit, Intermediate 2 or National 5). Adults may also study Highers at college without needing previous qualifications. Higher qualifications are usually necessary for entering university.

Notes on Data Sources

Schools

24. Data on pupils enrolled in schools in England were collected from schools and local authorities in January 2015 as part of the spring school census and the school level annual school census (for independent schools). They were published the following June in the Statistical First Release *Schools, Pupils and Their Characteristics: January 2015*, available at:
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2015
25. Annual schools census counts are carried out in January for pupils in Wales at individual pupil level and October for pupils in Northern Ireland. The annual schools census count for pupils in Scotland is carried out in September (excluding information on school meals, which is collected in a separate survey in February) - although the course of study followed by pupil aged 16 and over is not collected, but examination results for each subject are received in August.

Teachers

26. Data on the school workforce employed in local authority maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools and all primary, secondary, and special academy schools and free schools in England were collected from schools and local authorities in November 2014 as part of the fifth annual School Workforce Census. Data on independent schools, sixth form colleges and further education establishments are not included. Further information is available in the Statistical First Release School workforce in England: November 2014, available at:
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2014
27. Annual teacher numbers in Northern Ireland are based on a reference week in the autumn term. The figures in Table 1.3 include full-time permanent and part-time permanent teachers but exclude temporary teachers i.e. teachers filling vacant posts, secondments or career breaks. Prior to 2003/04, the figures for nursery, primary, secondary (non-grammar) and special schools were extracted from the computerised teachers' payroll system, whilst the figures for grammar schools were obtained from an aggregate statistical return completed by the schools. Now, every grant-aided school is sent a list of teachers derived from the computerised teachers' payroll system, and asked to mark any amendments. The net effect of this change in 2003/04 was that the number of teachers as verified by schools was some 400 lower than the number of teachers extracted from the payroll system, because, for example, substitute teachers had been incorrectly recorded. The Pupil: Teacher Ratio (PTR) calculation uses the teacher count and pupil count from the autumn term and is expressed as full-time equivalents, with part-time hours being converted on the basis that a fulltime working week is 32.4 hours.
28. In Scotland, the staff census covers all publicly funded schools (local authority and grant-aided). The information required to complete the September 2011 staff census was

collected electronically, through local authorities, from all publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools. The accuracy of the reported number of teachers in early learning and childcare (ELC) centres is affected by non-response to the early learning and childcare census. Please see background note 2.2 of relevant year's publication for further information:

www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00471917.pdf

29. In Wales, teacher information is collected as part of the school census in January each year. It covers all staff in the school including staff temporarily absent (for less than a term); staff covering anyone on long term absence/sickness leave or secondment (of a term or longer); relief/supply staff filling a nominal vacancy, and peripatetic teachers. The information is at school-level rather than for individual teachers/support staff, though the gender and categories of staff – head teacher, deputy head etc – are shown. Each person working 32.5 hours per week in the LA maintained schools is full time; 26 hours per week is full time in the independent sector.

Higher Education (HE)

30. From the academic year 1994/95 onwards, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has collected information for HE students within UK HE institutions. The data collected include enrolment numbers, qualifiers and first destinations of qualifiers. This includes students who are registered at HEIs but taught in Further Education Institutions (FEIs) through a franchise arrangement. Information about students taking higher education courses in FEIs comes from the Skills Funding Agency Individualised Learning Record and Scottish Funding Council. The specification of the HESA Standard Registration Population has changed from 2007/08 enrolments. Writing-up and sabbatical students are now excluded from this population where they were previously included in published enrolment data. Further information can be found on the HESA website at: www.hesa.ac.uk

Further Education (FE)

31. The source used for the FE data for England is the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). Further information from the Welsh Government's Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) on FE students are available at:

<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150325-further-education-work-based-learning-community-learning-2013-14-en.pdf>

Statistical information on further education students in Scotland are provided by the Scottish Funding Council, and institutes of further education provide data for Northern Ireland to the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI).

Public Examinations: GCSE, A level and SQA National Qualifications (NQ)

32. Data for England and Wales are produced from data provided by the GCSE and A level examining boards and groups. GCSE and A level data for Northern Ireland are derived

from the Summary of Annual Examination Results and data provided by the GCSE and GCE examining boards and groups. Scottish data are from the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Further Education (FE)

33. HM Treasury provided education expenditure figures in Table 4 from their Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (PESA). Education expenditure is defined here as under-fives, primary education, secondary education, post-secondary non-tertiary education, tertiary education, subsidiary services to education, research and development education and education not elsewhere covered. This is based on the UN Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) and is a sub-set of the education and training category. Training expenditure is not included. Total Expenditure on Services (TES) is a definition of aggregate public spending and covers most expenditure by the public sector that is included in Total Managed Expenditure (TME), where TME is a measure of public sector expenditure drawn from components in national accounts produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). TES broadly represents the sum of current and capital expenditure of central and local government, and public corporations, but excludes general government capital consumption and other accounting adjustments.

General Queries

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