



Each UK country assesses pupil performance and accredits adult learning differently

The qualifications that pupils work towards at the end of their secondary schooling and beyond are determined by the authorities in each of the four UK countries. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales qualifications remained similar (with GCSEs typically taken at age 16 and A levels taken at age 18) in 2015/16 and are all mapped onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). From 2016/17, however, these diverged as England introduced the new GCSEs in mathematics and English. In Scotland all qualifications can be mapped onto the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
NQF	Entry level awards, certificates or diplomas	GCSE – grades D, E, F, G	GCSE – grades A*, A, B, C	AS and A levels	Certificate of Higher Education	Diploma of Higher Education, Foundation Degree	Honours Degree	Master's degree	Doctorate

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
SCQF	National 1	National 2	National 3	National 4	National 5	Higher
	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10	Level 11	Level 12
	Advanced Higher, Certificate of Higher Education	Diploma of Higher Education	Bachelors, Ordinary Degree	Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma	Master's Degree	Doctorate

This publication presents numbers of pupils, schools and teachers up to 2016/17, alongside the performance amongst pupils at the end of compulsory schooling against national measures up to 2015/16. In Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland the share of pupils who attained the headline measures increased between 2014/15 and 2015/16, and remained broadly stable in England (0.3 percentage point decrease). Due to differences in the qualifications across the UK, direct comparisons are not advised and should not be used as a comparison of system quality.

In England

Just over half (53.5%) of the cohort at the end of compulsory schooling (key stage 4, typically aged 16) in 2015/16 achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C grade including English and mathematics (NQF Level 2) without retakes. This is a decrease from 53.8% in 2014/15.

In Wales

In 2015/16, 60.3% of pupils in their final year of compulsory schooling (typically aged 16) achieved 5 or more GCSE or equivalent passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (NQF Level 2) including those who passed as part of a retake. This has increased from 57.9% in 2014/15.

In Northern Ireland

In 2015/16, 67.9% of pupils in their last year of compulsory schooling in grant-aided mainstream schools (typically aged 16) achieved 5 or more GCSE or equivalent passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (NQF Level 2), including those who passed as part of a retake. This has increased from 67.0% in 2014/15.

In Scotland

In 2015/16, 61.7% of school leavers (those who leave school at the end of the academic year who could be between 16 and 18 and at various stages in their education) from maintained schools obtained one or more qualifications at SCQF Level 6 or better. This has increased from 60.2% in 2014/15.

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In this publication

The following tables are included in the statistical first release:

- Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2017 (SFR64_2017_Tables.xls)

The accompanying technical information provides information on the education systems in the UK and their data sources.

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at internationalevidence.statistics@education.gov.uk

1. Schools, pupils and teachers (Tables 1.1 – 1.4)

Schools (Table 1.1)

Section 1 provides an overview of the total numbers of schools, pupils and teachers across the UK¹.

In academic year 2016/17, there were 32,113 schools across the UK (Figure 1.1). Primary schools accounted for 65% (20,925) of all schools; secondary schools 13% (4,168); and nursery schools 9% (3,022). Schools in England constitute 76% of the UK total, with an additional 16% in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 4% in Northern Ireland.

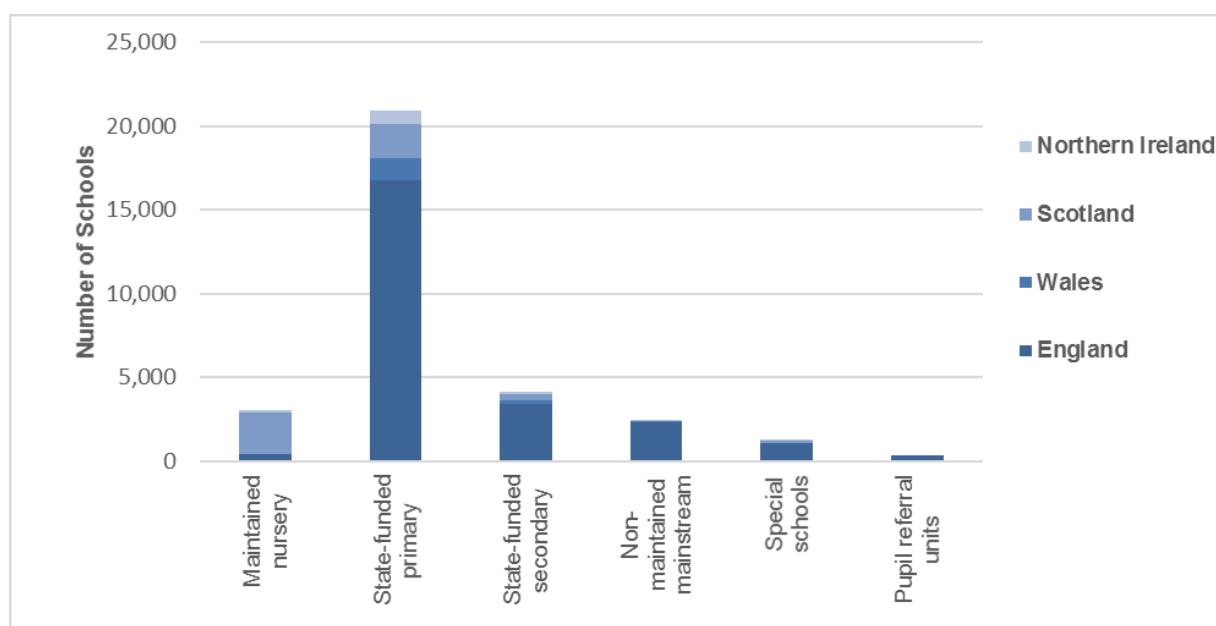
Figure 1.1 Number of schools in the UK by school type (2016/17)

School Type	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Nursery	3,022	9%
Primary	20,925	65%
Middle	10	0%
Secondary	4,168	13%
Non-maintained mainstream	2,381	7%
Special schools	1,256	4%
Pupil referral units	351	1%
Total	32,113	100%

The total number of schools across the UK has decreased by 29 (0.1%) in the last year. This contributes to a total decline of 288 schools (0.9%) since 2012/13 and a decline of 2,602 schools (7.5%) since 2000/01.

The fall in school numbers from 2015/16 is shown across most types and phases of school, with the exception of middle schools (introduced in Wales in 2012/13) and nursery schools. From 2012/13 to 2016/17 a similar trend is shown for most school types, with the exception of secondary schools that have increased by 91 (2.2%) to 4,168, driven by an increase in secondary schools in England only. The number of primary schools decreased by 144 (0.7%) over the period 2012/13 to 2016/17 (Tables 1.1). Figure 1.2 shows the numbers of schools by type across the four UK countries in 2016/17.

Figure 1.2: Number of schools across the UK by type and country (2016/17)



¹ This publication covers all schools across the UK where appropriate data sources exist. This includes non-maintained, or independent, schools. In chapter 1, the figures cover maintained and non-maintained schools across England, Wales and Northern Ireland but only maintained schools in Scotland.

Pupils (Tables 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2)

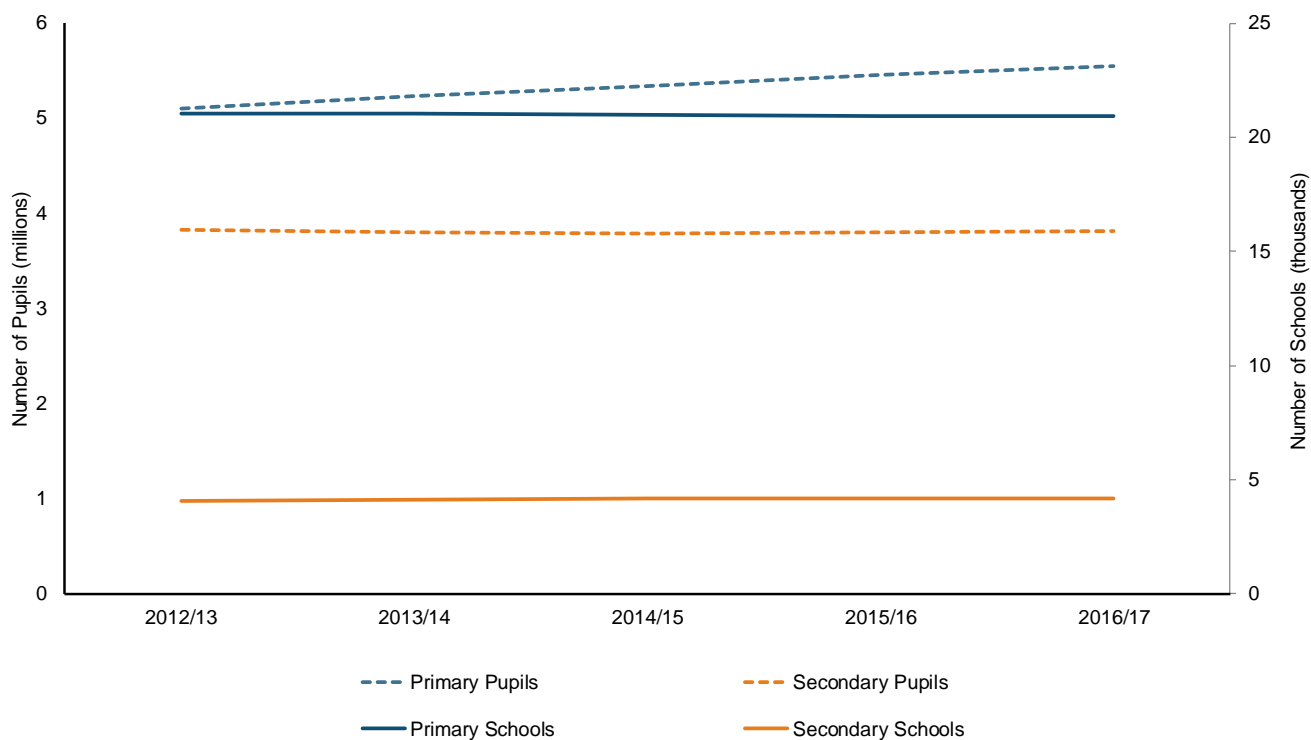
Within the maintained sector, the number of primary school pupils increased by 83,100 (1.5%) from 2015/16 to 2016/17. The number of secondary school pupils also increased from 2015/16 to 2016/17, by 24,200 (0.6%) to 3.8 million.

Figure 1.3 shows that while the number of primary schools decreased by 144 (0.7%) over the period 2012/13 to 2016/17, the number of primary school pupils has increased by 8.5%, from 5.1 million pupils in 2012/13 to 5.5 million pupils in 2016/17.

Despite the increase in secondary pupil numbers from 2015/16 to 2016/17, the number of secondary school pupils has decreased overall from 2012/13 by 2,500 (0.1%) to a total of 3.8 million in 2016/17 (Table 1.2.1). Over the same period, the number of secondary schools has increased by 91 (2.2%) to 4,681 schools (Figure 1.3).

Between 2012/13 and 2016/17 the biggest changes in pupil numbers have been in the number of pupils attending pupil referral units and special schools (Table 1.2.1). The number of pupils in pupil referral units has increased by 3,900 (32.8%) over this period to 15,670 pupils. The number of pupils in maintained special schools has also increased by 18,800 (17.4%) from 2012/13 to 126,720 pupils in 2016/17, however the number of pupils in non-maintained special schools, has decreased by 400 (10.6%) over the same period to 3,755.

Figure 1.3: Number of primary and secondary schools and pupils across the UK (2012/13 to 2016/17)



Teachers (Tables 1.3 and 1.4)

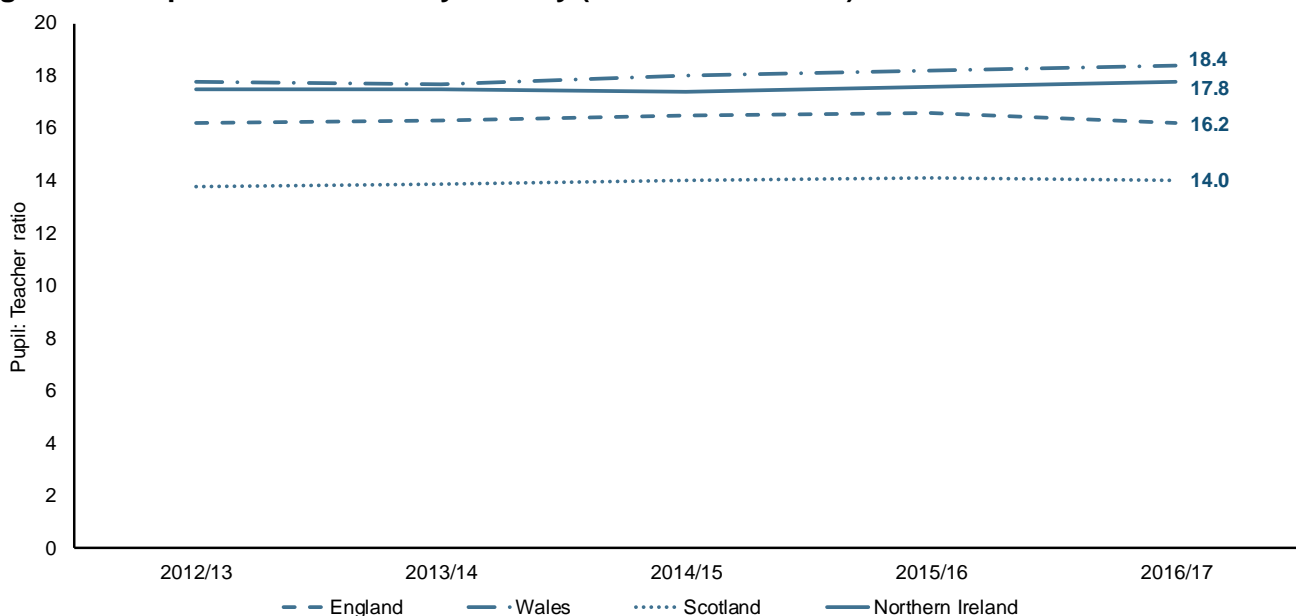
The total number of full time equivalent (FTE) qualified teachers across the UK has decreased by 739 FTE (0.1% of total FTE) from 2015/16 to 2016/17 (Table 1.3). The decrease in teacher numbers in the last year is caused by a decrease in full time teachers of 3,343 (0.7% of full time teachers) from 2015/16 to 2016/17, though this has been partly offset by an increase in the full-time equivalent contribution of part-time teachers of 2,604 FTE (3.0% of part time teachers FTE). The number of full-time qualified teachers has increased in maintained nursery and primary (0.2%) and non-maintained schools (0.5%) from 2015/16 to 2016/17, however the number of full-time qualified teachers has decreased in maintained secondary schools by 2.2% in the last year.

As in previous years, there were more female teachers than male teachers in UK schools. In 2016/17 70% of full-time qualified teachers in the UK were female. 82% of full-time qualified teachers in nursery and primary schools and 59% in secondary schools were female (Table 1.3).

The pupil: teacher ratio across all schools in the UK has decreased to 16.2 in 2016/17, from 16.5 in 2015/16 (Table 1.4). This follows a period of small year on year increases from 2012/13 to 2015/16. Within the public mainstream sector, the pupil: teacher ratio was 20.3 in primary schools and 15.3 in secondary schools in 2016/17.

The pupil: teacher ratio across all schools has decreased from 16.6 to 16.2 in England from 2015/16 to 2016/17. Similarly, a decrease is shown in Scotland from 14.1 to 14.0. The pupil: teacher ratio across all schools has increased in the last year in Wales, from 18.2 to 18.4 and in Northern Ireland, from 17.6 to 17.8 (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4: Pupil: Teacher ratio² by country (2012/13 to 2016/17)



² The Pupil: teacher ratio (PTR) within schools is calculated by dividing the total full-time equivalent (FTE) number of pupils on roll in schools by the total FTE number of qualified teachers. It excludes centrally employed teachers regularly employed in schools.

2. Post-compulsory Education (Table 2.1 – 2.5)

Post-compulsory Education and Training (Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1 and 2.3-2.5)

Section 2 provides an overview of the total numbers of institutions providing post-compulsory education and training across the UK, as well as total enrolment and full-time academic staff.

Whilst pupils may leave school and enter post-compulsory education at the end of the year when they turn 16 in each of the UK countries, pupils in England must remain in education or training until they are 18 (either in full-time education or as an apprentice or trainee, or in part-time education or training alongside 20 hours or more per week of work or volunteering). Though technically being in compulsory education, they have been included in this chapter.

The number of universities across the UK remains the same, while the numbers of Further Education Colleges (FEC) stabilised	University numbers have remained stable in the last four years (142 in 2015/16). The last noticeable expansion was in 2012/13, when 9 university colleges were awarded university status. The numbers of Further Education Colleges (FEC) remained stable in 2015/16 after having fallen in previous years. FEC numbers have reduced from 402 in 2011/12 to 381 in 2015/16. This decline in numbers of FECs was evident in England, Wales and Scotland. (Table 2.1).
Number of academic staff decreases at FECs but full-time staff increases at Higher Education Institutions	The number of full-time equivalent academic staff in FECs (including full-time and part-time staff) has decreased from 80,000 in 2012/13 to 73,000 in 2015/16. In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) the numbers of full-time academic staff have increased from 117,000 in 2011/12 to 135,000 in 2015/16. (Table 2.1).
Decrease in participation in post-compulsory education	Participation in the UK has decreased from 4.8 million in 2011/12 to 3.8 million in 2015/16 for further education (FE) programmes and from 2.7 million in 2011/12 to 2.4 million in 2015/16 for higher education (HE) programmes. The overall decrease in HE participation was due to a decline in part-time students, down 31.1% between 2011/12 and 2015/16, particularly for undergraduate courses other than first degrees (declined by 47.0%). There has been an increase in full-time students over the same period. (Table 2.4).

Information on Alternative Providers (APs) of higher education does not feature in the main tables of this publication as UK-wide data is not available. APs are higher education providers who do not receive recurrent funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) or other public bodies and who are not FECs. For further information on APs, refer to the section covering higher education in the country information and data sources note.

Figure 2.1 shows the trend in the number of full-time students studying HE from 2011/12 to 2015/16, by level of study. Since 2011/12, there has been an increase in participation on first degrees of 6.6%. Over the same time period, there has been a small decrease in participation on postgraduate degrees (1.5%). This has been driven by a decrease in participation on Master's degrees of 4.4% over the five-year period, however, there has been an increase in PhD study of 8.3% over the same period. (Table 2.4).

Figure 2.1 Full-time students in higher education in the UK by level (2011/12 to 2015/16) (thousands)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
First Degree	1,319.8	1,319.6	1,351.8	1,358.6	1,407.5
Other Undergraduate	151.1	123.6	92.5	122.6	122.2
Postgraduate Degree	309.7	297.0	305.4	305.4	304.9
of which Masters	240.2	225.6	231.1	229.7	229.6
of which PhD	69.5	71.3	74.4	74.7	75.3

Figure 2.2 shows the trend in participation in part-time HE study from 2011/12 to 2015/16, by level of study. Since 2011/12, there has been a decrease in students studying at every level, although the decline is sharpest for undergraduate courses. This is particularly driven by the numbers studying undergraduate courses other than first degrees, which fell by 47.0% between 2011/12 and 2015/16. (Table 2.4).

Figure 2.2 Part-time students in higher education in the UK by level (2011/12 to 2015/16) (thousands)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
First Degree	241.3	229.8	203.6	187.0	177.7
Other Undergraduate	378.5	301.4	286.9	216.9	200.4
Postgraduate Degree	261.8	242.7	237.0	234.7	229.5
of which Masters	236.3	217.3	211.1	207.5	204.7
of which PhD	25.5	25.3	25.9	25.4	24.8

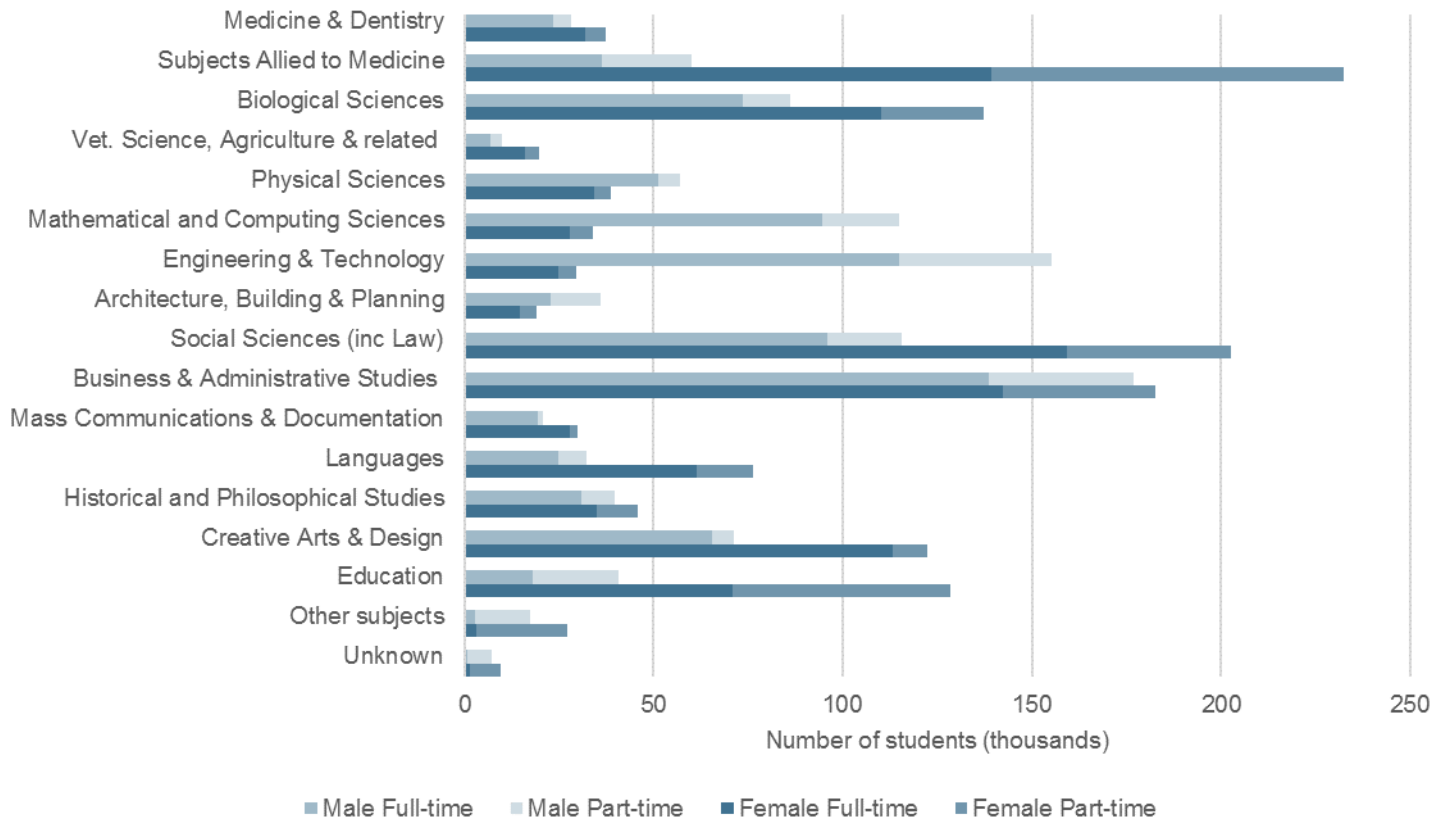
From 2011/12 to 2015/16, participation in part-time study fell for all subjects except Engineering, where numbers rose by 12.2%. The decline was sharpest in subjects related to Languages (42.9%) and Historical and Philosophical Studies (39.9%). (Table 2.2.1)

Figure 2.3 shows that the most popular subject for full-time HE study in the UK in 2015/16 was Business & Administrative Studies, with 281,000 full-time participants. 82.3% of full-time participants in Engineering & Technology, and 77.3% in Mathematical and Computing Sciences, were male; and, 79.8% in Education and 79.2% in Subjects Allied to Medicine were female.

The most popular subjects for part-time HE study in the UK in 2015/16 were Subjects Allied to Medicine, Education and Business & Administrative Studies. For part-time study, 79.8% of participants in Subjects Allied to Medicine were female and 71.6% of participants in Education were female; 89.5% of participants in Engineering & Technology, 76.9% in Mathematical and Computing Sciences, and 75.3% in Architecture, Building and Planning were male. Overall, 59.2% of part-time students were female, compared to 55.2% of full-time students. (Table 2.2)

For students in the UK, the most popular subjects for both full-time and part-time students have remained the same for the past 5 years. (Table 2.2.1).

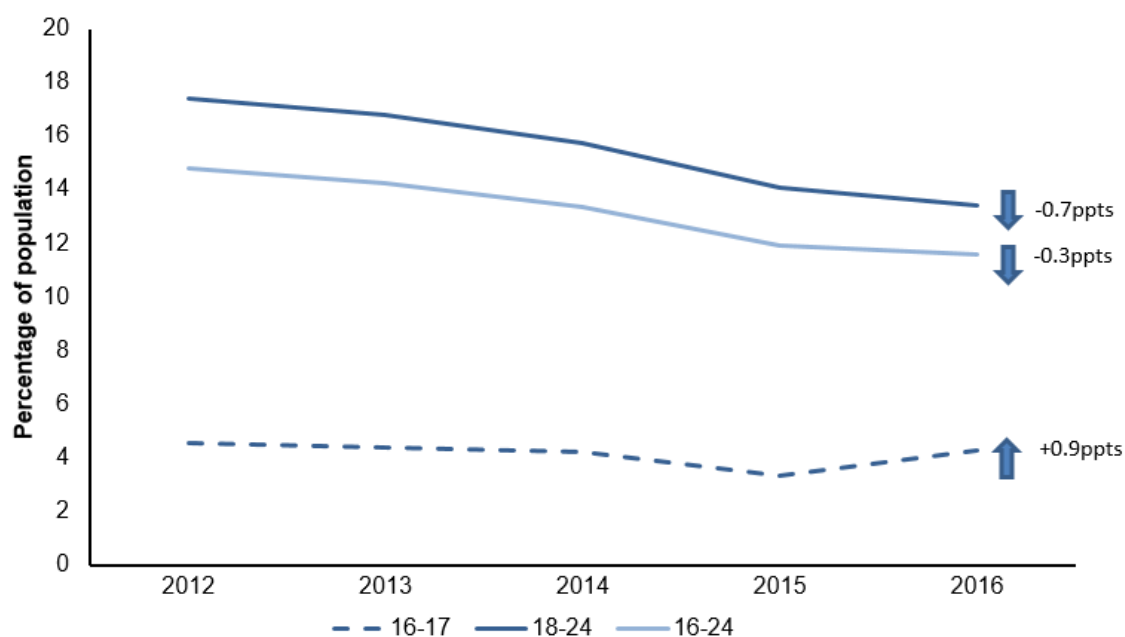
Figure 2.3: Full- and part-time higher education students by subject and gender (2015/16) (thousands)



16 to 24 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by age (Table 2.5)

Figure 2.4 shows a fall in the percentage of 16-24 year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the UK between 2012 and 2016, from 14.8% in 2012 to 11.6% in 2016. The NEET rate for 18-24 year olds has fallen each year between 2012 and 2016, from 17.4% in 2012 to 13.4% in 2016, including a 0.7 percentage point (ppt) fall between 2015 and 2016. At age 16-17, the NEET rate fell each year between 2012 and 2015, but between 2015 and 2016 there was a rise of 0.9ppts, leaving the NEET rate in 2016 (4.3%) only slightly lower than in 2012 (4.6%). (Table 2.5).

Figure 2.4: 16 to 24 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) by age (2012 to 2016)



3. Qualifications (Tables 3.1 – 3.3)

Qualifications (Tables 3.1, 3.2 a, b, c and d, 3.3 a, b, c and d, 3.4)

This section takes a closer look at the qualifications pupils at the end of their compulsory schooling have attained, typically at ages 16 and 18³.

Qualifications at age 16 and 18 in the UK

The qualifications that pupils work towards at the end of their secondary schooling and beyond are determined by the devolved authorities in each of the four UK countries. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales all qualifications can be mapped onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which has nine levels from entry level to doctorate (for example, PhD) level. In Scotland all qualifications can be mapped onto the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, pupils commonly take GCSEs at 16 and A levels at 18. GCSEs at grades G to D are equivalent to a Level 1 on the NQF, whilst GCSEs at grades C to A* are equivalent to a Level 2. A levels at all grades (A to E) are equivalent to a Level 3. The national performance measures used to hold schools to account in England no longer include the grades pupils achieved through resits. However, these are included in Wales and Northern Ireland. New national performance measures were introduced for England in 2015/16. Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school. It is a type of value added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils with the same prior attainment. Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across eight qualifications including mathematics and English. More information is available in the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 [guidance](#). Gender breakdowns for the previous headline measures are no longer published.

Qualifications in Scotland are based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). There are 12 levels on the framework, SCQF levels 1 to 7 are covered by school education. The new National qualifications make up SCQF levels 3 to 5. For most young people in Scotland S4 is the last compulsory year of school, but the majority will choose to stay on and complete S5 and S6. Highers (SCQF level 6) are generally taken in S5/S6; Highers, sometimes along with Advanced Highers (SCQF level 7, usually taken in S6) are the qualifications required for entry to Higher Education. School leaver data looks at a pupil's attainment throughout their school education. The leaver cohort is made up of all pupils who leave during or at the end of that year, so it contains pupils who leave at various stages of their schooling. Although Standard Grades (SCQF levels 3 to 5) were not available in 2013/14, the 2013/14 school leaver data will include Standard Grade attainment of leavers who sat these qualifications in earlier years of their schooling. New Highers were phased in in 2014/15 and run concurrently with the previous qualifications. Both sets of qualifications meet the SCQF level 6 standard and are comparable.

Given the different qualifications systems outlined in the box above, it is not suitable to present a comparative picture of pupil performance across the four UK countries. The following sub-sections provide an overview of pupil performance against the respective national measures.

³ In chapter 3, the figures cover pupils entered for GCSE and A level (or equivalent) qualifications in maintained and non-maintained (independent) schools in England and Wales. However, figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland cover only maintained schools (grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland).

GCSE (or equivalent) attainment in England (Tables 3.2a(i) and 3.2a(ii))⁴

In 2015/16, 53.5% of pupils at the end of key stage 4 achieved 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2a(i)). This reflects their attainment according to their first attempt only.

Higher GCSE attainment rates for girls	More girls achieved a grade A*-C than boys in all subject groups, with the exception of physics and other science (Table 3.2a(ii)). The largest differences were in design and technology, media/film/TV and communication studies, where girls outperformed boys by 20 percentage points.
Sciences and classical studies have the highest percentage of passes	The subjects with the highest percentages of passes at grade A*-C were physics, biological science, chemistry and classical studies all with a pass rate of 91%.

A level attainment in England (3.3a(i) and 3.3a(ii))

In 2015/16, 57.5% of the population aged 17 in England achieved at least two substantial level 3 passes⁵ (Table 3.3a(i)).

Higher A level attainment rates for girls	More girls achieved a pass at grade A*-C than boys in all subject groups with the exception of other sciences and modern languages (Table 3.3a(ii)). The largest differences were in physical education (19 percentage points), ICT and home economics (both 15 percentage points).
Mathematics and English (including English literature) were the most frequently studied subjects	Mathematics (81,500 entries) and English (including English literature) (76,200 entries) were the most frequently studied subjects. Further mathematics (89%), modern languages (88%) and classical studies (86%) had the highest percentages of passes at grades A*-C.

⁴ GCSE attainment in the first entry for each subject is counted from 2013/14, therefore attainment in England may appear to be lower from 2013/14 when compared with attainment in previous years as this was based on best entry in circumstances where young people have entered more than once. These GCSE attainment figures cannot be directly compared with attainment prior to 2013/14 or with figures for Wales and Northern Ireland.

⁵ The percentage is calculated by dividing the total numbers of pupils achieving at least two substantial level 3 passes in 2015/16 (typically aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year) by the total population aged 17 at the start of the academic year. Substantial level 3 qualifications are defined as qualifications that are at least the size of an A level (180 guided learning hours per year), such as a BTEC subsidiary diploma level 3, and which count in the 16-18 performance tables. If a qualification is equal in size to 2 A levels it is counted as 2 substantial level 3 qualifications. Information on the qualifications that count in the 16-18 performance tables is available in the 16-19 technical guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-accountability-headline-measures-technical-guide>

GCSE (or equivalent) attainment in Wales (Tables 3.2b(i) and 3.2b(ii))

In 2015/16, 60.3% of pupils in their last year of compulsory education in Wales achieved 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2b(i)). This includes resits.

Higher GCSE attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 64.7% of girls and 56.1% of boys achieving 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2b(i)).

Chemistry, biological science and physics have the highest percentage of passes

The subjects with the highest percentages of passes at grade A*-C were biological science (92%), physics (91%) and chemistry (91%) (Table 3.2b(ii)).

A level attainment in Wales (Tables 3.3b(i) and 3.3b(ii))

In 2015/16, 28.8% of the population aged 17 in Wales passed two or more A levels (or equivalent)^{6 7} (Table 3.3b(i)). This does not include students in Further Education Colleges.

Higher A level attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 33.0% of girls and 24.9% of boys achieving two or more passes (Table 3.3b(i)).

Most popular subjects are mathematics, English and history

History (2,300 entries), English (including English literature) (2,300 entries) and mathematics (2,200 entries) were the most frequently studied subjects. Further mathematics (91%) and history (90%) had the highest percentages of passes at grades A*-C (Table 3.3b(ii)).

⁶ The percentage is calculated by dividing the total numbers of pupils attaining two or more A levels in 2015/16 (typically aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year) by the total population aged 17 at the start of the academic year.

⁷ Further Education Colleges are not included.

GCSE (or equivalent) attainment in Northern Ireland (Tables 3.2d(i) and 3.2d(ii))

In 2015/16, 67.9% of pupils in their last year of compulsory education in Northern Ireland achieved 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2d(i)).

Higher GCSE attainment rates for girls	Girls outperformed boys with 71.6% of girls and 64.2% of boys achieving 5 or more GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade A*-C including English and mathematics (Table 3.2d(i)).
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Physics and other science have the highest percentage of passes	The subjects with the highest percentages of passes at grade A*-C were physics (96%) and other science (96%) (Table 3.2d(ii)).
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A level attainment in Northern Ireland (Tables 3.3d(i) and 3.3d(ii))

In 2015/16, 35.8% of the 17-year-old population in Northern Ireland passed three or more A levels (or equivalent) at grades A*-C⁸ (Table 3.3d(i)).

Higher A level attainment rates for girls	Girls outperformed boys with 42.9% of girls and 28.9% of boys achieving three or more passes (Table 3.3d(i)).
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Most popular subjects are mathematics and biological science	Mathematics (3,200 entries) and biological science (2,900 entries) were the most frequently studied subjects (Table 3.3d(ii)). Further mathematics (97%) and home economics (91%) had the highest percentages of passes at grades A*-C.
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⁸ The percentage is calculated by dividing the total numbers of pupils attaining three or more A levels in 2015/16 (typically aged 16-18 at the start of the academic year) by the total population aged 17 at the start of the academic year.

Qualifications achieved by school leavers in Scotland (Table 3.1)

Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of school leavers (those who left at the end of the school year who will have left at various stages of their schooling) attaining one or more Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) qualifications. The percentage of school leavers attaining one or more SCQF qualifications at level 6 or above increased from 60.2% in 2014/15 to 61.7% in 2015/16.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of school leavers attaining one or more SCQF qualifications (2011/12 to 2015/16)

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Percentage of school leavers attaining					
1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better	95.8	96.3	96.3	96.2	96.3
1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better	81.6	82.7	84.3	85.2	85.6
1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or better	55.8	55.8	58.1	60.2	61.7

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) attainment at level 5 or better (Tables 3.2c(i) and 3.2c(ii))

In 2015/16, 85.6% of school leavers in Scotland obtained one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better (Table 3.2c(i)).

Higher SCQF level 5 attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 87.5% of girls and 83.9% of boys gaining one or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 or better (Table 3.2c(i)).

Most popular subjects are mathematics and English

The most frequently studied subjects in terms of examination entries for all learners at SCQF levels 3-5 were mathematics (84,100 entries) and English (67,900 entries) (Table 3.2c(ii)).

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) attainment at level 6 or better (Tables 3.3c(i) and 3.3c(ii))

In 2015/16, 61.7% of school leavers in Scotland obtained one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or better (Table 3.3c(i)).

Higher SCQF level 6 attainment rates for girls

Girls outperformed boys with 67.3% of girls and 56.3% of boys gaining one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 or better (Table 3.3c(i)).

Most popular subjects are mathematics and English

The most frequently studied subjects in terms of examination entries for all learners at SCQF level 6 were English (37,000 entries) and mathematics (18,900 entries) (Table 3.3c(ii)). The percentages of passes at grade A for these subjects were 27% for English and 31% for mathematics.

Highest qualification held by working age adults (Table 3.4)

In 2016, 44% of the UK working age population had a qualification at NQF level 4 or above. 42% of working age males had a qualification at NQF level 4 or above, compared to 45% of working age females. The percentage of working age population with a qualification at NQF level 4 or above was highest among the 30-39 age group at 53%. The percentage of working age population for England, Wales and Northern Ireland with a qualification at NQF level 4 or above were 44%, 37% and 35% respectively. 47% of working age adults in Scotland had a qualification at SCQF level 7 or better^{9, 10} (Table 3.4).

⁹ Qualification statistics for England are calculated using a different methodology to those for other UK countries and are not directly comparable.

¹⁰ SCQF levels used in Scotland are not directly comparable to NQF levels used in England/Wales/Northern Ireland. Figures relating to level 7 have been provided as the closest match to NQF level 4. Figures for the UK have been calculated using the NQF levels assigned to Scottish qualifications in the Labour Force Survey. Further information can be found at [NQF](#) and [SCQF](#)

4. Education Expenditure (Table 4)

Total (central government and local authority) expenditure on education in 2016/17 was £86.3 billion, a reduction in real terms of 2.3% compared to 2012/13 (Table 4). As a percentage of GDP, government expenditure on education has decreased over the period from 2012/13 to 2016/17 from 4.9% to 4.5%.

Whilst the majority of education expenditure in 2016/17 is delivered through local government (53.0%), this share has decreased in the last five years (down from 59.2% in 2012/13). The distribution of government funding across the phases of education has remained broadly similar over the past five years. The share of total government expenditure on primary education (32.1%) is at the same level as in 2012/13. The share of total government expenditure on secondary education (46.5%) has risen over the same period from 44.8% in 2012/13. There has been a decrease in the share of the total government expenditure on tertiary education (from 9.8% in 2012/13 to 7.4% in 2016/17). In 2016/17, secondary education received the largest share of the total (44.8%) followed by primary (32.1%).

5. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the [department's website](#).

Schools		Qualifications	
1	Number of schools, by type of school	3.1	GCSE, A level, SCE/NQ and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils and students
1.2	Full-time and part-time pupils by age, gender and school type	3.2a(i)	GCSE and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by gender
1.2.1	Full-time and part-time pupils by gender and school type	3.2a(ii)	GCSE entries and achievements for pupils at the end of key stage 4 by subject and gender
1.2.2	Full-time and part-time pupils by age, gender and school type (Time series)	3.2b(i)	GCSE and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils in their last year of compulsory education by gender
1.3	Qualified teachers by type of school and gender	3.2b(ii)	GCSE entries and achievements for pupils in their last year of compulsory education by subject and gender
1.4	Pupil: teacher ratios (PTRs) and pupil: adult ratios (PARs) within schools, by type of school	3.2c(i)	SQA Qualifications obtained by school leavers
Post compulsory education		3.2c(ii)	SQA qualifications entries and achievements at SCQF levels 3-5 by subject, all learners
2.1	Number of establishments of further and higher education by type, and full-time academic staff by gender	3.2d(i)	GCSE and vocational qualifications obtained by pupils in their last year of compulsory education by gender
2.2	Students in higher education by level, mode of study, gender and subject group	3.2d(ii)	GCSE entries and achievements for pupils in their last year of compulsory education by subject and gender
2.2.1	Home and Overseas Students in higher education by mode of study, gender and subject group	3.3a(i)	A level and equivalent vocational qualifications obtained by young people in Schools and Further Education Colleges by gender
2.3	Students in further education by country of study, mode of study, gender and age,	3.3a(ii)	A level and equivalent vocational qualifications obtained by young people in Schools and Further Education Colleges by gender
2.4	Students in further education by gender and higher education, by gender, level of study and mode of attendance	3.3b(i)	A level and equivalent vocational qualifications obtained by young people in schools by gender
2.5	People aged from 16 to 24 Not in Education, Employment or Training ('NEET') by gender	3.3b(ii)	A level entries and achievements for young people in schools by gender and subject
		3.3c(i)	SQA qualifications obtained by school leavers
		3.3c(ii)	SQA qualifications entries and achievements at SCQF level 6 (Highers) by subject, all learners

Qualifications

- 3.3d(ii) A level entries and achievements for young people in schools by gender and subject
- 3.4 Highest qualification held by working age adults, by gender and age
-

Education Expenditure

- 4 Education expenditure on services
-

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

Rounding conventions and suppression

The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality.

In most tables the figures are presented as whole numbers while in some tables, percentages are displayed to 1 decimal point. The rounding convention is as follows: any fractions of 0.5 and above will be rounded up, anything less than 0.5 will be rounded down.

The following conventions have been used in the tables:

- . not applicable
 - .. not available
 - nil or negligible
 - x suppressed because of small numbers
-

6. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

7. Technical Information

An additional document accompanies this SFR providing further information on the education systems in each country and detail of the data sources used in producing the data.

8. Get in touch

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Department
for Education



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