



University College Dublin  
University for All

# Who Counts?

## University for All Data, Metrics, and Evidence 2020-2021



Authors: Bairbre Fleming, Lisa Padden & Anna M. Kelly





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Kelly, Anna and Padden, Lisa. (2018) **Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions: From Vision to Practice**. Dublin: UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.



Padden, Lisa, O'Connor, John and Barrett, Terry (Eds) (2017) **Universal Design for Curriculum Design: Case Studies from UCD**. Dublin: UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.



Fleming, Bairbre. (2018) **Facts, Figures & Faces: New Era 21 Years**. Dublin: UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.



Fleming, Bairbre and Tracey, Michelle. (2018) **From the Bench to Centre Field: Celebrating 30 Years of UCD Supports for Students with Disabilities**. Dublin: UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.



**UCD Widening Participation Committee Annual Reports**. Dublin: UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.



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# Foreword



## **Professor Mark Rogers**

I am delighted to present this publication - Who Counts? University for All Data, Metrics, and Evidence 2020-2021. UCD is committed to being a University for All, where all students belong and are valued.

[University for All](#) is a whole-institution evidence-based systemic approach to access and inclusion. Grounded in the [UCD Strategy 2020-2024: Rising to the Future](#), the [EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2020 - 2025](#), and the [Education and Student Success Strategy, 2020 - 2024](#), University for All recognises, promotes and values the breadth of talent, experience and contribution of all students, and creates an inclusive educational experience for all.

In this context, the University for All initiative embeds inclusion across the university further developing UCD's capacity to attract, retain and develop our diverse student population. A key component in its implementation is the availability of metrics, to enable us to measure progress of this initiative, and to benchmark the participation of under-represented student groups across the entire university. This report shows the evolution, growth and use of equity data in UCD. It also offers insights to data sources and methodologies, which enable participation trends and patterns throughout the student lifecycle to be tracked, and critically allows us to use these data to inform planning and policy.

In the rolling out of the University for All initiative, the availability of such data is a key enabler to successfully moving access and inclusion from the margins to the mainstream and demonstrates the criticality of information, knowledge and understanding in this university-wide change process.

We are delighted to share this publication with you and hope it can help you to achieve similar success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Rogers" clearly distinguishable.

**Professor Mark Rogers,  
Acting President**

**02.**

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# **Wider Policy Influence**



### **Dr Anna Kelly**

The publication of this Who Counts? access data report is a significant staging point in the University's inclusion odyssey (UCD, 2018, 2020, 2021). The importance of data, metrics and evidence cannot be underestimated. The late Kofi Annan said that 'Knowledge is power. Information is liberating.' and moreover, that these are 'partners for progress'. Our experience of the power of data and information in the development of a University for All accords with this truth. Readily available, reliable and robust information is an essential building block in the development of a universally designed educational experience. In short, data, metrics and evidence are indispensable tools to achieve a University for All.

Two centuries after John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University*, UCD's University for All is shaping and informing higher education. Uniquely in Irish higher education, we have pioneered University for All to create an inclusive culture and promote system change, where all students belong and are valued, and where the philosophy of 'a student is a student' underpins the development of universally designed mainstream systems, processes and approaches (Kelly, 2018; Kelly and Padden, 2018). In a research-intensive university, information and evidence shine a bright light on the path of transformation and system change. The twin objectives of Irish national access policy are to widen participation (HEA, 2004, 2008, 2015, 2018), and to mainstream access and inclusion "into the 'everyday life of the HEIs so that it permeates all faculties and departments and is not marginalised as the responsibility of the designated access office" (HEA, 2015, p. 25). Historically in the access domain, there has been an over-reliance on individual stories of 'heroism' and compelling tales of 'exceptional' students who 'beat the odds'. In addition, the collection of access data was often left to access offices, where local records were maintained. In many instances however, these remained separate from the institution's record system, and could not easily be interpreted, interrogated or tracked. In developing the University for All initiative, we identified very early on that reliance on such methods was insufficient to build and embed an inclusive institutional approach of the scale contemplated.

University for All is a whole-institution, evidence-based, systemic response that weaves inclusion into the fabric of the University at all levels. As such, it engages the entire university community, addressing all aspects of campus life - teaching & learning, student supports, the built environment and the technological infrastructure. Therefore, the implementation strategy needed to consider a wide range of factors including, the University's tradition and culture; its status as a research-intensive institution; its size, scale and complexity; the organisational structures and the range of stakeholders. In constructing this strategy, we drew on the work of Kotter (2012), who argued that change begins with a 'sense of urgency' and a 'burning platform', and described 'complacency' as the enemy of organisational transformation. We deliberately set out to use evidence and data as a 'burning platform' to act as a catalyst for change, to build momentum, and enhance understanding. Put simply, this data approach was designed to help answer the question 'why?' create a University for All; the availability of data, metrics and evidence helped create awareness of access and inclusion, prompt debate, generate curiosity, and create visibility for the initiative.

This Who Counts? report is the culmination of many years' work, represents the considerable learning and experience gained, and offers a window to a critical component in the University's access and inclusion journey. In keeping with the ethos of University for All, the report delivers a holistic data view, spanning the entire student lifecycle, using both quantitative and qualitative metrics. Such knowledge and information is both powerful and liberating, underpins the progress made, helps identify good practice, and offers a clear roadmap to develop interventions that address the gaps.



**Dr Anna Kelly**

**Director, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning**

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**From  
Narrative to  
Numbers**

# Widening Participation Data Development in UCD



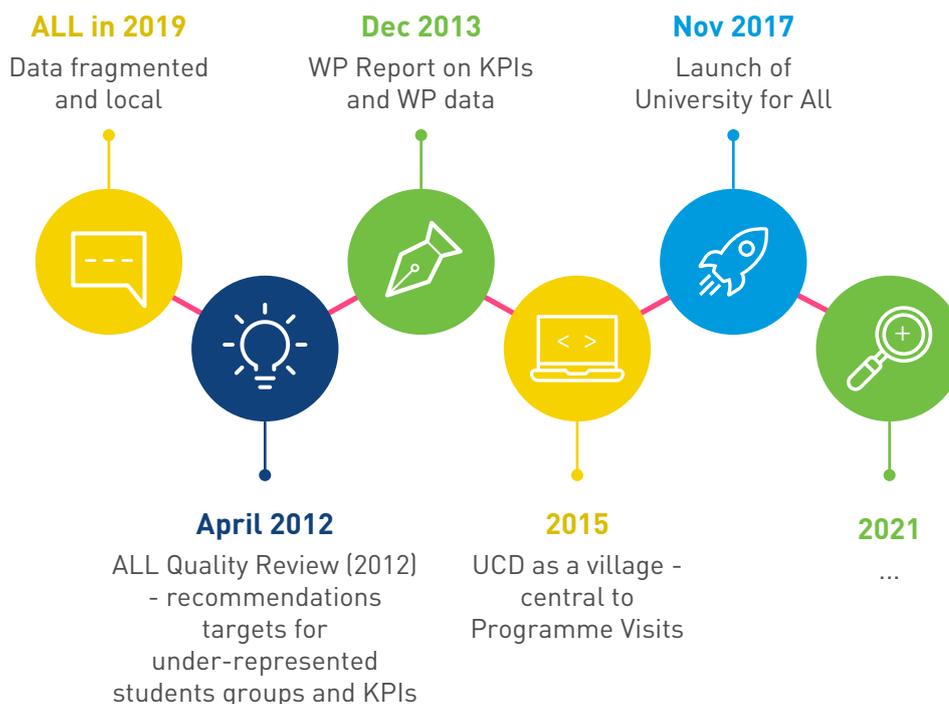
**Dr Bairbre Fleming**

The UCD Widening Participation Committee has been a catalyst for action in developing a data policy for UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.

The Widening Participation Committee was established in May 2012

to promote, advise and monitor the University's progress towards achieving widening participation (UCD Widening Participation Committee, 2015). The University established the committee to act as the formal mechanism to oversee, promote, and monitor the University's progress towards the achievement of access, participation, and success for under-represented students.

## UCD for All - development of data metrics to drive change



This process was prompted by a range of national and institutional responses to the emerging awareness of issues of equity and under-representation in the higher education sector.

The articulation of Ireland's ambition to ensure equity of access to higher education has its origin in the Government Green Paper – Education for a Changing World (Department of Education, 1992). This ambition prompted the establishment of a National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education in 2003 to facilitate educational access and opportunity for groups who are under-represented in higher education. Equity groups were defined and targeted initiatives were developed to widen access to higher education for people with a disability, mature students, young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and members of the Travelling and refugee communities. Data, or the lack of appropriate and adequate data, in these targeted initiatives was evident in a range of reviews (Osborne & Leith, 2000). Practices and projects during this period of access initiatives tended to rely on qualitative and descriptive narrative to describe the participation of equity groups.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) conducted a review of the targeted initiatives in 2004 and determined the need for 'comprehensive and systematically collected data on participation in higher education on a scale that has not happened to date' (Higher Education Authority, 2004). They noted that 'the absence of data ... makes it difficult to build a national picture of access to higher education and to plan effectively'. During this period, UCD facilitated a number of HEA targeted initiatives for different equity groups. Each of these projects reported separately on the discrete groups, across a range of separate areas, using a variety of methodologies to describe the project outcomes. The variety and variability of data in one institution alone reinforced the need for a more coherent institutional access plan and a plan for data reports.

In 2009 UCD created the first Access and Lifelong Learning (ALL) Centre, bringing several separate activities and functions together. The new ALL Centre developed the first UCD Access strategy, *Opening Worlds*. This strategy committed to the establishment of an oversight committee to advise on policy and best practice in the achievement of an inclusive university (UCD, 2010, p. 25). In 2012, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) was the subject of a periodic Quality Review, which highlighted the need to embed the access agenda and reposition the ALL unit as supportive of, rather than constituting the sole or main component of, UCD's widening participation effort. Over the next several years, the purpose, role, and structure of the ALL unit was reimagined and reconfigured, and the Widening Participation (WP) Committee was established. The first WP Committee produced a series of reports, including: 'Institutional Barriers to Full Participation by Students Constrained by Personal or Professional Circumstances, or Economic or Social Disadvantage' (2013a), and 'Key Performance Indicators: Recommendations: Definitions and Data Collection' (2013b). The latter report made recommendations on:

- 1.** the definitions of under-represented student cohorts;
- 2.** the data collection mechanisms to be used to gather and report on these students;
- 3.** participation targets.

The first and critical action was the consideration of key performance indicators (KPIs), for participation of underrepresented students. UCD developed KPIs that committed the University to achieving 33% of undergraduates being drawn from target equity groups by 2020. A robust data system was developed to identify and track the participation by underrepresented student cohorts in the University. The success of the process has relied on significant collaboration across the University and senior management support in facilitating access to the institutional data. In particular the process benefitted from the support of the Director of Institutional Research at several stages which led to the data that is currently captured and shared across the University.

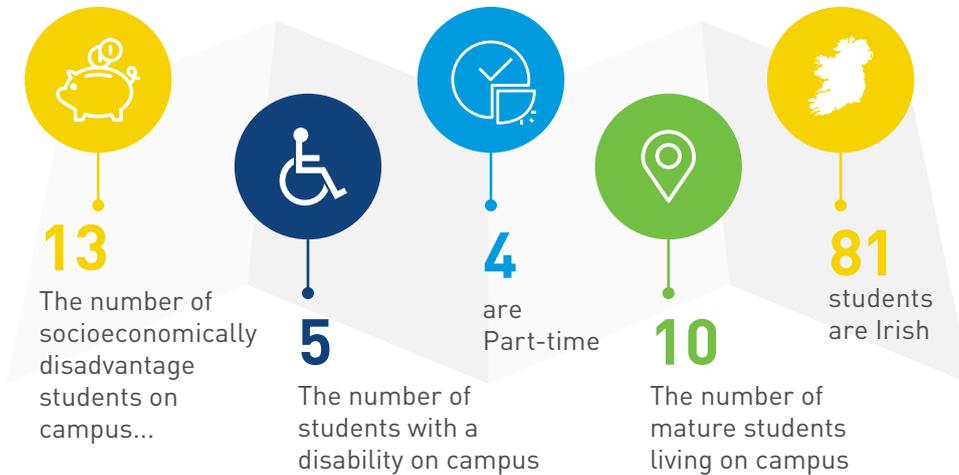
Following a review at the end of the three-year period, the UCD Widening Participation Committee was re-established in 2016, with new Terms of Reference; the Widening Participation Committee reviewed progress made towards the achievement of recommendations made in the Institutional Barriers report (UCD, 2015). Each Programme Board was also invited to provide a report on progress towards meeting targets for under-represented student groups and on actions taken to promote inclusion, participation, and student engagement (UCD, 2017).

On the 16th May, 2017, the UCD Governing Authority discussed access developments. Access & Lifelong Learning provided a comprehensive briefing on the systemic approach to building a mainstream inclusive university community. Actions and progress across key institutional dimensions including infrastructure, academic integration, student support, data and research, as well as engagement and outreach were discussed. The Governing Authority commended and endorsed the approach taken.

The depiction and dissemination of the data was also reconsidered. While the data was being shared with WP Committee members – it appeared dense and inaccessible to some. The sharing of data typically did not generate debate or comment. It resonated with the HEA's earlier comments in its review of targeted initiatives as being ineffective in understanding what was being depicted, and by inference, what its value was.

This prompted a rethink by ALL on how to 'tell the data story'. While there was a lot of data to share, its relative value was hard to interpret. ALL tried an alternative concept and asked people to imagine – 'If UCD was a village of 100 people'. In this village scenario both the University, and separate programme areas, could be understood as villages of 100 people. Each target group could then be described relative to that village. Basic visualisations were shared with the WP committee to immediate interest and debate. This depiction was developed further over the following five years.

### If UCD was a village of 100 people



From the beginning this collated data has been shared with the WP Committee and with key stakeholders. A decision to democratise and share all available data has enhanced the process further.

The launch of UCD's University for All initiative has given further impetus to the data process as we explore and share other ways of visualising and displaying our data with programme areas. When the University for All initiative was introduced to programme boards by the project team all programmes requested disaggregated data, in order to get greater visibility of the diversity of students within their own programmes and make informed implementation and action plans. As a result of this, a data visualisation project began in April 2018 to provide both institutional and programme level data on our widening participation student profiles. This data was benchmarked against our 33% target and provided to members of the Widening Participation Committee in UCD. The provision of programme level data is key to the implementation of University for All and the dissemination of this disaggregated data through programme boards and University for All programme workshops has created a significant lever for change. This democratisation of data is critical in empowering and fostering a sense of ownership for the University for All initiative.

*Bairbre Fleming*

**Dr Bairbre Fleming,  
Deputy Director, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning**

# Institutional Research at UCD



**Maura McGinn, Director of Institutional Research**

Institutional Research can be defined broadly as the application of social research methods to the operation of an institution to promote informed planning and decision making by transforming institutional data into valid, reliable, and useable information.

The Institutional Research Office at UCD has access to data on the lifecycle of students, staff, research and finance and is charged with analysing and interpreting these data for use in planning and policy decisions. It has a major role in providing statistical data and analysis to Colleges and Schools to support the annual strategic planning process and statutory reporting. Data analysed and reported on are in line with best practice regarding quality control, integrity and validity checking. The office maintains consistency thorough standardised data definitions, collection methods and analysis.

UCD Institutional Research has a major responsibility for the development, administration and analysis of local, national and international surveys. The office is responsible for compiling data requests and reports required by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), other government agencies, rankings and other external bodies.

In summary UCD Institutional Research supports UCD as an Institution, its processes and people.

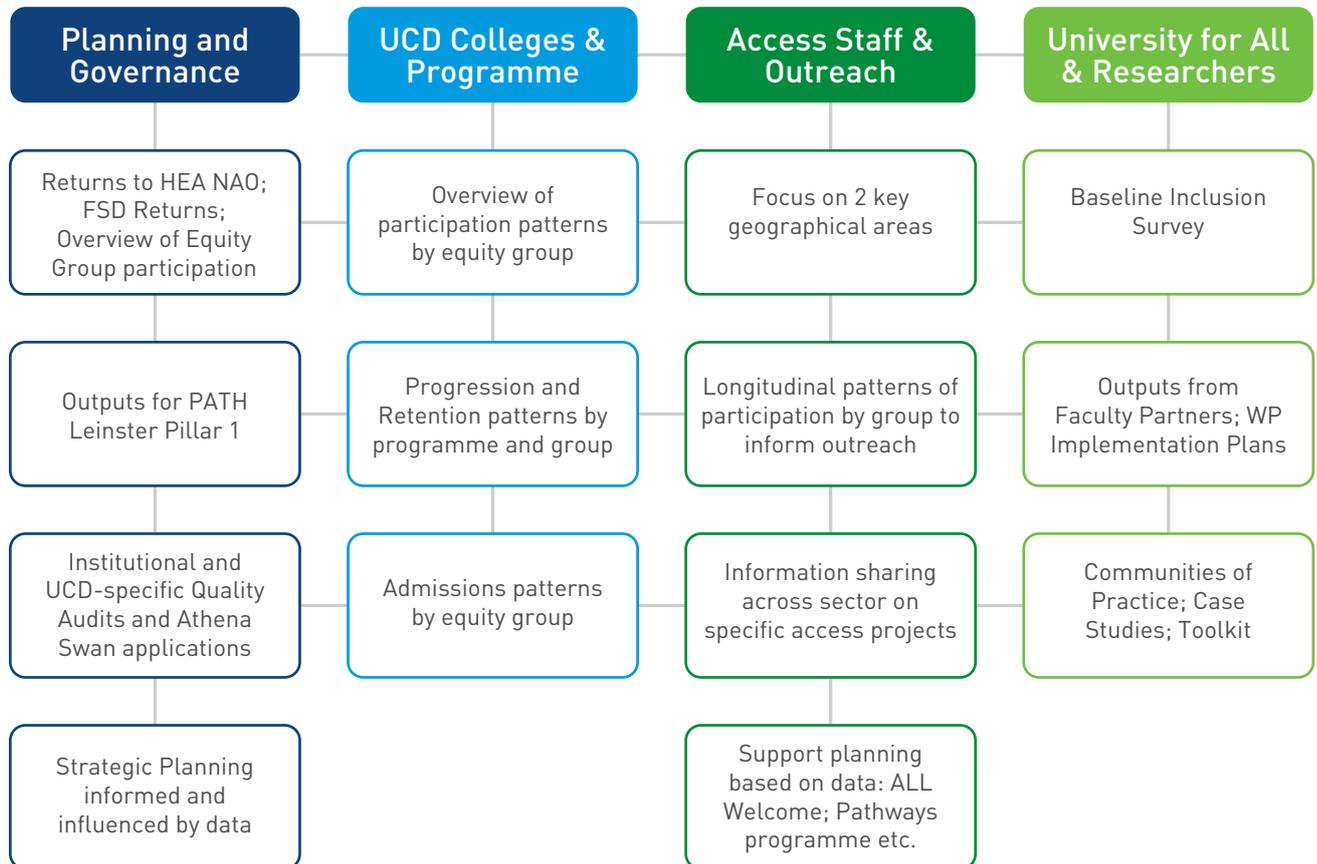
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# Using Widening Participation Data in UCD

## Using Widening Participation Data in UCD

### UCD WP Data



Widening Participation data has a number of uses in UCD and, as we have expanded the data offering, the requests for data sharing have increased significantly. We regularly receive requests from colleagues who wish to use the data in various ways, including their own research, as well as local tracking and external applications (e.g. Athena Swan). This graphic shows some of the key uses of the data currently but this is evolving each year as we make more data available and the expectation in the University changes to expect ease of access to this data.

## Planning and Governance

The data described in this report is used to provide necessary returns to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Department of Further and Higher Education Research, Innovation and Science who provide UCD with various streams of funding for the purpose of widening access and supporting underrepresented students. Specifically data is returned on equity groups to the HEA National Access Office (NAO). Additional data for those students who are supported with the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) is also regularly returned. The FSD is administered by the HEA to assist higher education institutions in ensuring students with disabilities have the necessary assistance and equipment to enable them to access, fully participate in and successfully complete their chosen course of study. UCD has developed an integrated system for data capture used in the Needs Assessment and support process. This allows for detailed reporting to the HEA and also ensures that this sensitive data is protected to the highest degree. Our data capture and methodologies also allow us to make detailed returns on the equity group participation in the university and report on progress on the targets set out in the National Access Plan. We also provide detailed data returns as part of our work on the national Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH). PATH is a dedicated fund, broken into three strands, committed to increasing participation by under-represented groups in higher education. UCD are part of Leinster Pillar 1, a group of HEIs who are working together on related projects and workstreams. Internally this widening participation data is frequently requested as part of institutional and local quality reviews and audits. We are also able to provide this data to UCD Schools making Athena Swan applications and/or applications for programme (re) validation. This data also informs strategic planning in the University at all levels.

## **UCD Colleges and Programmes**

UCD Colleges and Programmes are provided with the disaggregated data in this report to ensure full visibility of the diversity of their student populations. The provision of this data facilitates the targeting of supports and resources and allows for planning changes of practice to further embed inclusion. Progression and retention patterns by programme and group are provided to ensure any gaps are identified and addressed as necessary. Currently the progression and retention data is available only in relation to students who enter UCD through the designated access admissions pathways. This is an area we aim to address in the future. The admissions data in this report is used extensively by programme boards for enrolment planning. Opportunities for provision of additional reserved places to widen access are visible in the data and can be acted on quickly.

## **Access Staff and Outreach**

In our own unit, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, this data is the basis for our support planning for access students e.g. ALL Welcome, Pathways to the Professions and our extensive Outreach programmes. UCD has committed to engage and facilitate participation of underrepresented groups in higher education in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and South Dublin County Council areas. UCD runs a number of innovative and impactful outreach programmes, such as the Future You Mentoring Programme and UCD for All Student Experience Days. Longitudinal patterns of participation of underrepresented socio-economic groups (SEG) have informed our outreach programme which has been refined and developed to have maximum impact in our target areas. The data presented in this report also forms part of the information sharing across the sector on specific access projects e.g. developing access pathways and supports for students from the Traveller community.

## **University for All and Researchers**

Our widening participation data has aided in a wide range of University for All related research in the university. In 2020 we conducted a baseline survey with all staff and students (outlined below) and the data in this report provides essential context to the results of that research. This data is also used by our University for All Faculty Partners who are working on Universal Design for Learning and other related inclusion and access projects across the university. Our University for All implementation is based on dissemination of this data in various formats, including as a central component of the workshops which are being held in all programme areas in UCD. Widening Participation Representatives use this data to inform their planning and implementation projects and use this data to measure the impact of their interventions. This data and the methodology of capturing and disseminating the data is also shared, as appropriate, with our International Community of Practice for those using the Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions. The data also features in a number of our Case Study publications outlined later in this report. Essentially availability of this data informs the direction of much of the University for All related research, projects and interventions allowing for an evidence-based approach and accurate impact measurement of initiatives.

# Challenges in Widening Participation Data Gathering and Use

## Policy Changes

While we are very fortunate to have a National Access Policy in Ireland, changes to this Policy and resulting changes in the prioritising of data to be gathered and reported on can prove challenging in a context of competing priorities and changing landscapes in terms of what and how we gather data on students. Methods necessarily change and are updated in real time and in response to these changes and this can lead to issues in terms of consistency in the data being tracked. An example of this is the recent change in the Equal Access Survey and the way socio-economic disadvantage is identified and reported nationally. This necessitated a change in how we create those definitions in our own institutions. This change required extensive time and resources, particularly from our Director of Institutional Research, who created models of past data to ensure our indicators were sufficiently accurate to use going forward. When new equity groups are identified it often takes considerable time to create robust methods of data collection to establish a baseline and a regular reliable way to report on progress. For example, we are not currently reporting on student ethnicity in our disaggregated programme-level data.

## Reliable and Robust

All data collection and reporting methodologies must be reliable and robust. You will see in the next section that we state clearly the source of each of our data sets and the indications and definitions used in this work. Again, this takes significant resources and a whole-institution approach must be taken to agree these methodologies with all stakeholders. At times our access to data is very limited, frequently due to genuine concerns relating to data protection and use of the data. This can prove challenging especially when setting to delve deeper into the data sets and use them to aid in planning and innovating in the student support and engagement space. At the moment we do not have a robust method of collecting outreach-related data and this is a national concern for the sector. In order to resource outreach activities we must be able to prove impact and without a national database collecting data from outreach participants and outcomes in terms of change in aspirations and eventual progression to higher or further education, this proves challenging.

## **Democratising Data**

Democratising data across a large complex organisation can be challenging. We are producing this comprehensive report as one way of achieving this but we are striving for an embedded dashboard on UCD's institutional systems. Communication of complex data sets to a varied audience takes time, resources and expertise. Our Widening Participation Committee representatives are tasked with communicating their local data within their programme boards and other local channels and we produce a Widening Participation Report annually to share the institutional data. However, we are aware that there is more work to be done in this area. Numbers alone do not tell the story and sometimes when presented without context this data can be incorrectly interpreted and questioned. Dissemination of data must be done with sensitivity to how it may be utilised by others. For example, we would not want low widening participation numbers in a particular programme to be seen by access students as evidence they are not welcome or that they do not belong. We also must be compliant with data protection legislation and ensure that students are not identifiable in the data we provide. For this reason, we don't provide disaggregated data on undergraduate programmes with less than 50 students enrolled.

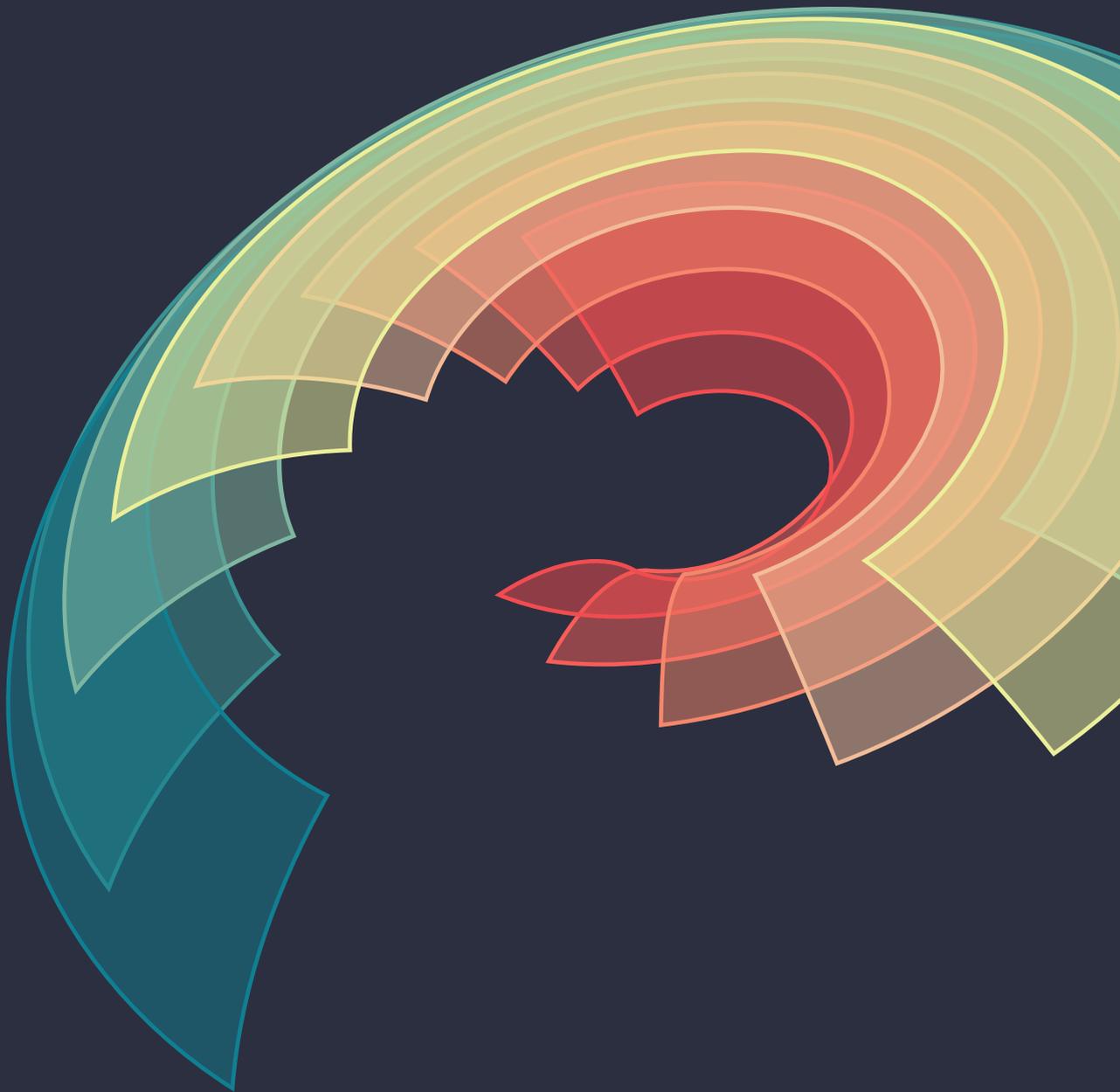
**“Knowledge is  
power. Information  
is liberating”**

**- Kofi Annan**

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# The Data



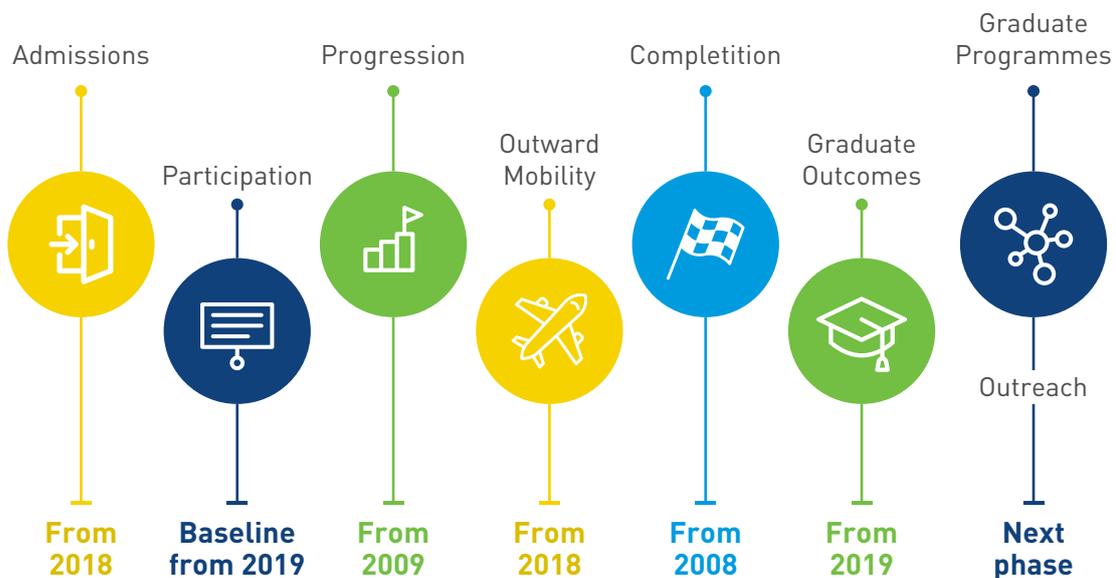
# Measuring Equity Across the Access Student Journey: Sources, Methodologies, Trends and Patterns



**Dr Lisa Padden**

**Programme Manager - University for All**

## Data - essential to drive change



In this report you will see data relating to access students across a broad range of categories. While data can only provide part of the picture of students' UCD journey, we provide metrics which demonstrate access and inclusion through admissions, participation, progression, retention, outward mobility, completion and graduate outcomes. You will also find our methods of collecting qualitative evidence as well as a range of other metrics for embedding inclusion throughout the University.

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# Admissions

UCD Registry provides UCD Access & Lifelong Learning with data following the completion of the annual CAO (Central Applications Office) offers process. This data details the access quotas and admissions to full time undergraduate programmes. Quotas, of reserved places for access students, are established by programme boards seeking to target access students in order to widen participation on their programmes. Significant progress has been made to date, with a number of access pathways into undergraduate programmes and a quarter of all undergraduate places targeted for these pathways. We have made this admissions data available to Programme Boards since 2018 through our Widening Participation Representatives.

Visibility of this data has made it possible for us to implement a policy of sharing the access targeted places across pathways which has increased the number of access accepted places overall year on year. This year in particular you will notice that 80.09% of access targeted places were accepted by those on access pathways. This is a just over 10% increase from 2019. In this year's report we have included a number of comparative graphs showing access pathways and admissions to all full-time undergraduate programmes. We have included these because feedback has suggested that these are most useful for furthering the conversation about access and inclusion.

The pathways outlined in this report are:

- **HEAR** - The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a higher education admissions scheme for students who are resident in the Republic of Ireland and underrepresented at Higher Education due to their socio-economic background. Eligibility for HEAR is determined through a national application and review process as part of the CAO process and is based on family income and a number of other social and financial indicators. Offers are made as part of the CAO process in late August/Early September. Students who are eligible for HEAR may compete for a targeted reduced-points place on a programme and are provided with additional financial, academic and personal supports to remove barriers which they may face at university.

- **DARE** - The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a higher education admissions scheme for students with disabilities. Students who are eligible for DARE may compete for a targeted reduced-points place on a programme. Eligibility for DARE is determined through a national application and review process as part of the CAO process and is based on evidence of disability and educational impact. Offers are made as part of the CAO process in late August/Early September. Students who are eligible for DARE, and all those who disclose a disability before or during their programme, are offered a Needs Assessment where appropriate supports are agreed and implemented to remove barriers which they may face at university.
  
- **Mature** - students who are at least 23 years of age on the 1st of January of the year of entry can apply to most UCD programmes on the grounds of mature years. Application on the basis of mature years can vary depending on the UCD programme and can include provision of a personal statement and other information on application, completion of an assessment such as the Mature Students Admissions Pathway (MSAP), Health Professions Admissions Test (HPAT) or the Nursing Written Assessment. Mature Students can also choose to take any Open Learning module for credit instead of taking the MSAP exam. Application via the mature entry pathway is made through the CAO and offers are usually made in July each year. Each year UCD also offers two University Access Programmes. These are one year long, part-time courses designed to prepare adults, who may not have formal qualifications, for successful study at university. These are Special Purpose Awards (Level 6) which equip mature students with the skills and confidence required to take the next step to selected degree courses at UCD. The University Access Courses offered in UCD are:
  - Access to Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Law | (AHSSL)
  - Access to Science, Engineering, Agricultural Science and Medicine | (SEAM)

- **QQI-FET** - Students with relevant and appropriate QQI-FET (formerly known as FETAC) Level 5/6 major awards and components, with a minimum of Distinction in five components, may be admitted on a competitive basis to a range of UCD programmes. Application via the QQI-FET entry pathway is made through the CAO and offers on the basis of QQI-FET qualifications are usually made in early August each year. For all courses (except Nursing and Veterinary Nursing courses), the required components can be completed over multiple sittings leading to an appropriate major award. Due to the competitive nature of the Nursing and Veterinary Nursing courses, points are only calculated where the appropriate major award is presented in a single sitting, together with all the required components and results.

## Trends, Patterns and Commentary

For 2021-22 we will begin reporting on those who take up places through our Open Learning degree pathways. Open Learning is one of UCD's most flexible pathways for entering into undergraduate study. At the time of publication of this report, Open Learning can be used to enter 12 UCD undergraduate programmes. Open Learning allows students to study a variety of UCD undergraduate modules at their own pace and accumulate credits for a Certificate or Diploma in Open Learning.

The upward trend in the undergraduate quota of targeted places for access admission pathways continued in 2020-21. The total number of places on undergraduate programmes increased due to changes required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and while there was an increase in the number of targeted places it was not in line with the overall increase in places. Thus while the number of quota places increased the percentage of access places decreased slightly from 2019-20 (25.9%) to 2020-21 (24.5%).



857

Students



726

Students



619

Students

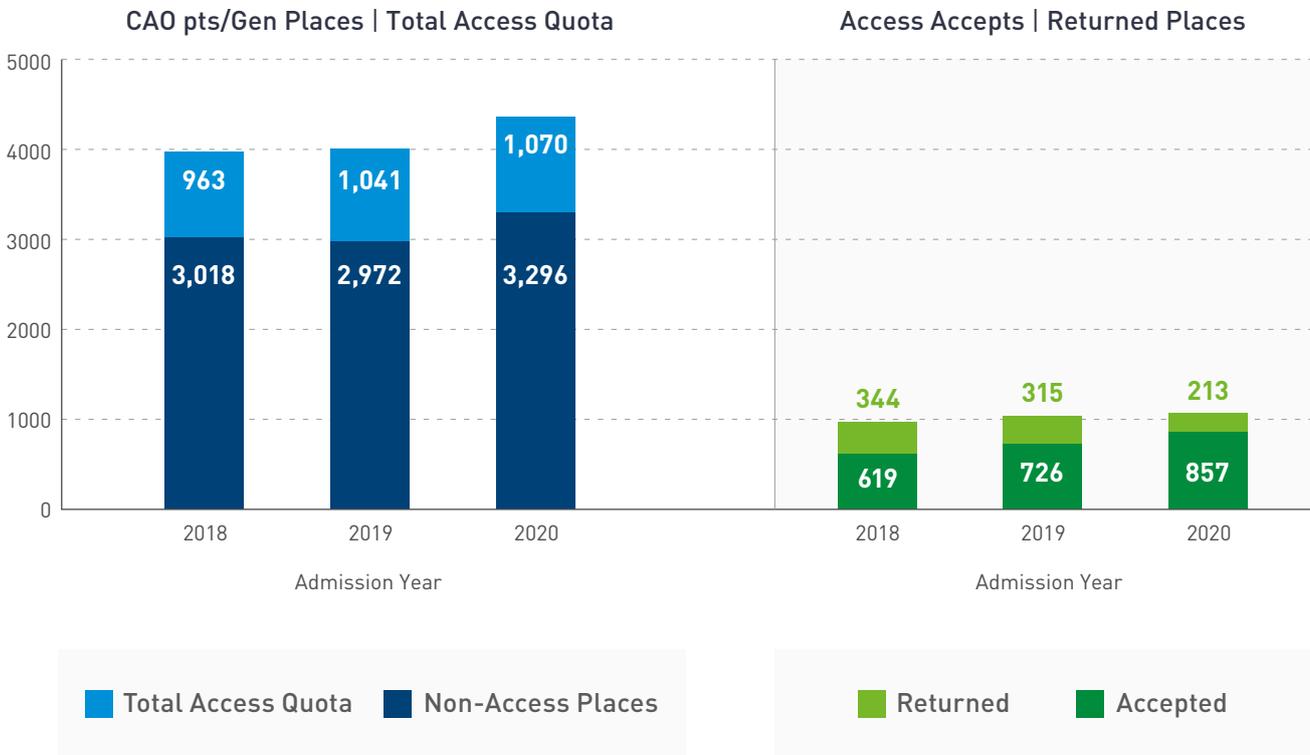
While the overall quota of places is substantial this does vary from programme to programme being as high as 41.7% in Sociology and Social Policy and as low as 7.5% in Biomedical, Health and Life Sciences. These discrepancies are substantial and in many cases those programmes with the lower quotas are those with the highest CAO points requirements. UCD's Widening Participation Representatives are working to address these disparities and increase the number of targeted places on these programmes. In particular, Widening Participation Representatives have identified those programmes which do not offer all alternative admission pathways. Some programmes do not yet offer a QQI-FET pathway so this is being addressed where possible. Additionally one programme, Veterinary Medicine, did not offer a mature admissions pathway. This is being addressed for entry 2022-23.

Along with the increase in the number of targeted places we also saw a significant increase in the number of places accepted by those on access admissions pathways. Acceptance moved from 69.74% in 2019-20 to 80.09% in 2020-21. We have requested additional data for 2021-22 so we will be able to report on offer conversion in future reports. This will allow us to target necessary support and resources at the offer stage. The acceptance rate varies significantly across the access admissions pathways. For 2020-21 the targeted places were filled as follows:

- **DARE** 224 places filled from 260 targeted - 86.2%
- **HEAR** 147 places filled from 271 targeted - 54.2%
- **Mature** 222 places filled from 312 places targeted - 71.2%
- **QQI-FET** 264 places filled from 227 places targeted - 116.3% (made possible through the quota sharing noted above)

Clearly further work is needed to understand the trends visible here, with a particular focus on reasons HEAR eligible candidates are not taking up available places. As noted above, having additional data to compare offers with acceptances will go some way to understanding this. Beyond this, additional data is required from the CAO to understand the application patterns and programme preferences of HEAR eligible candidates.

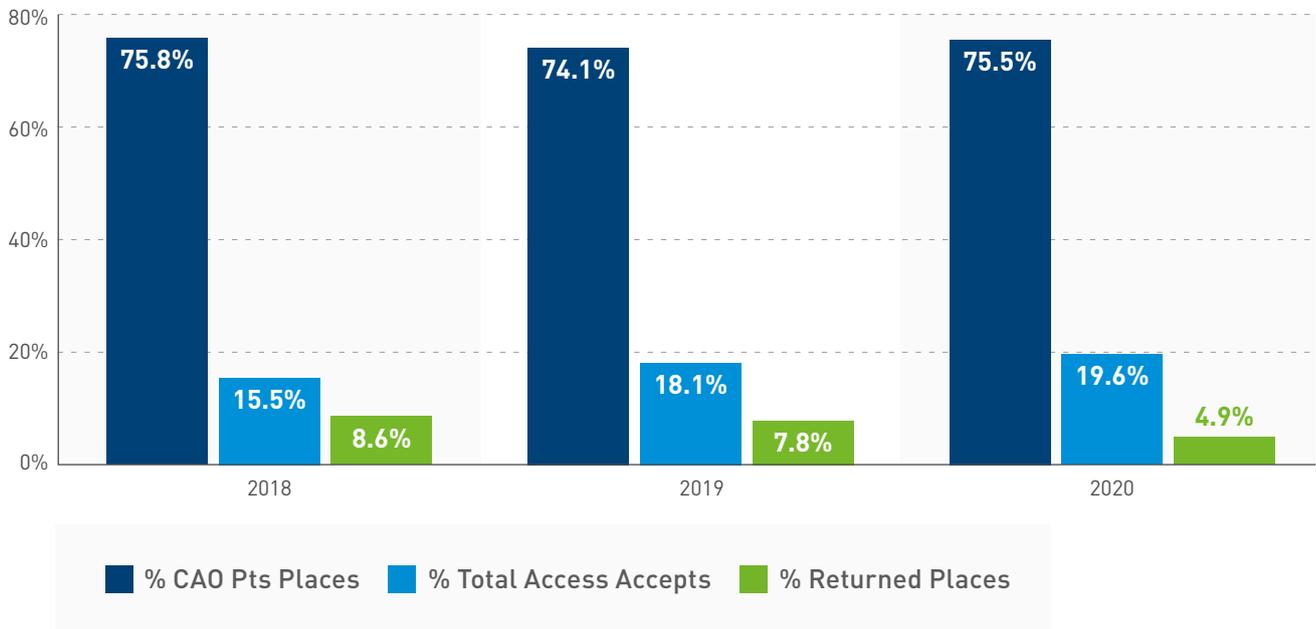
## UCD Undergraduate Admissions



## Places, Quota, Accepts, Shortfall

Admission Year	Places	Total Access Quota	Total Quota %	Total Access Route Accepts	Return to gen. allocation
2020	4,336	1,070	24.5%	857	213
2019	4,013	1,041	25.9%	726	315
2018	3,981	963	24.2%	619	344

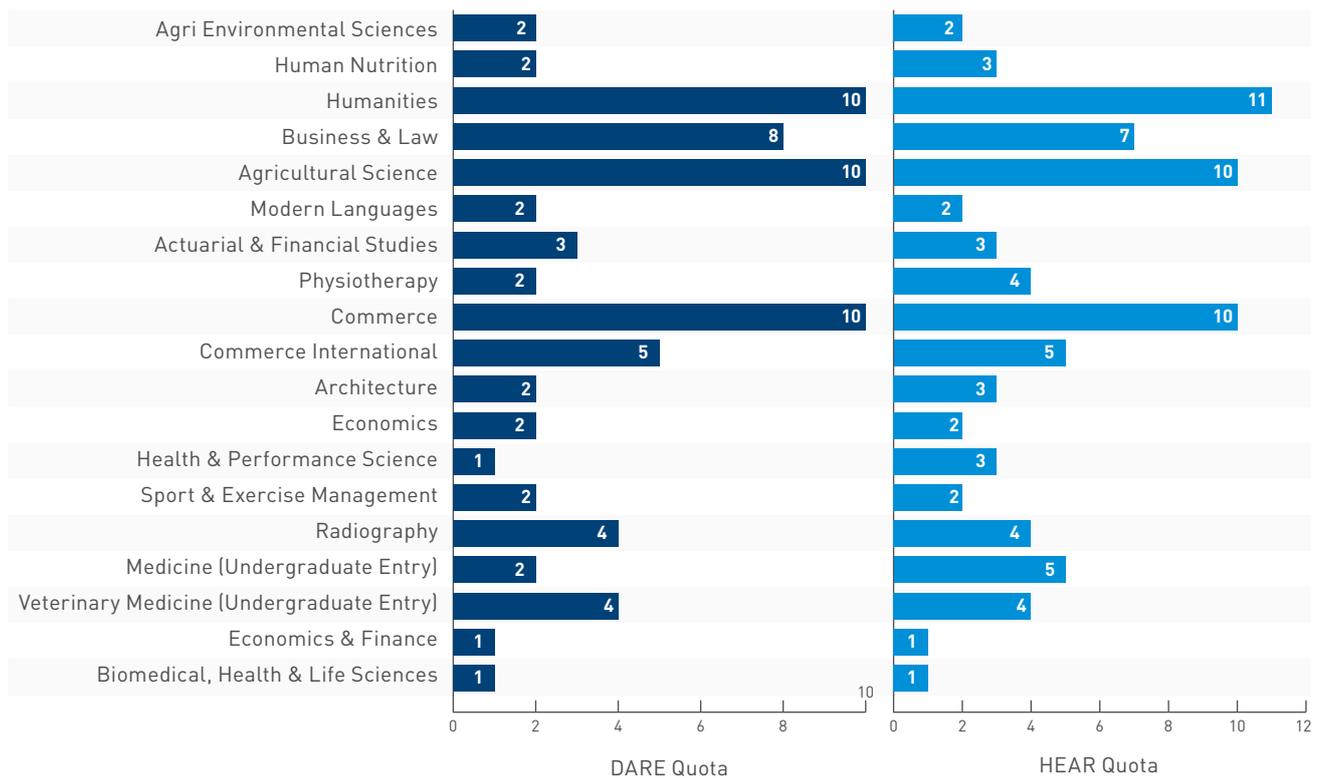
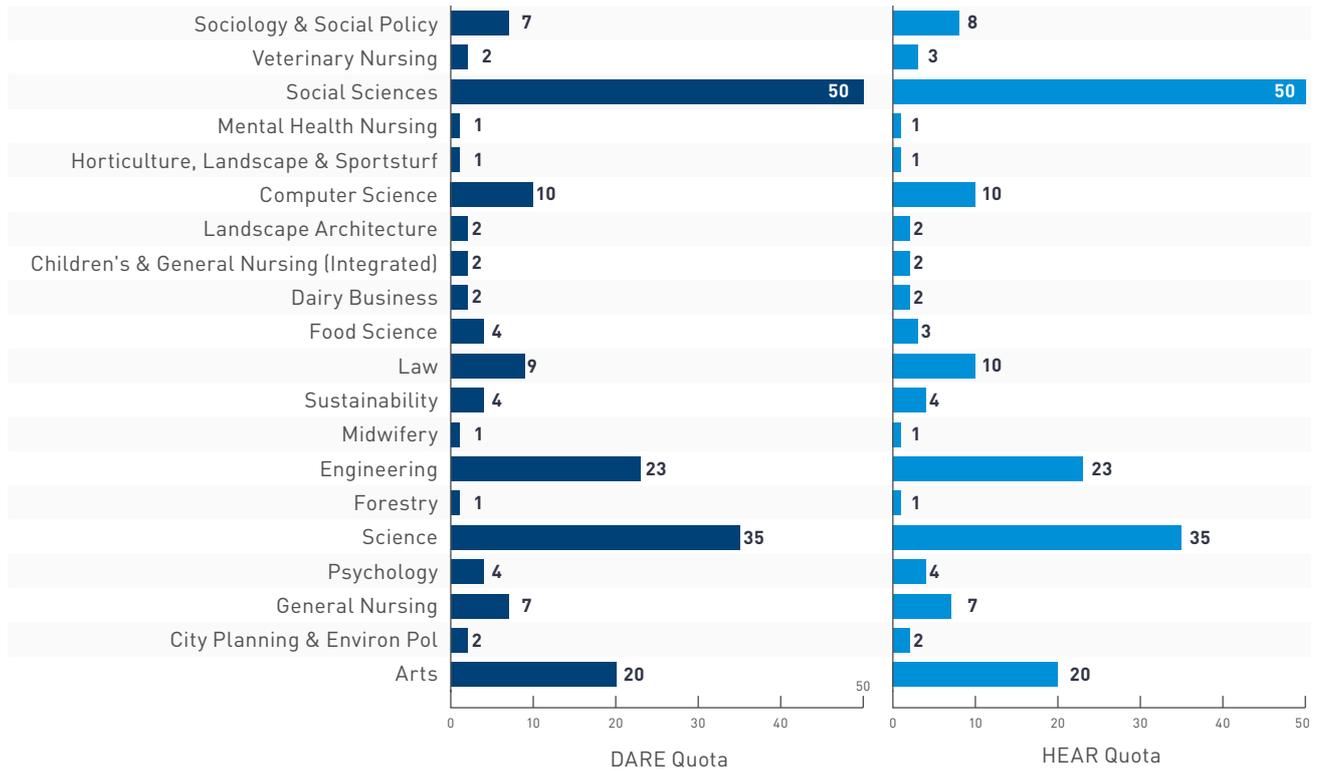
## UCD Undergraduate - Pathways

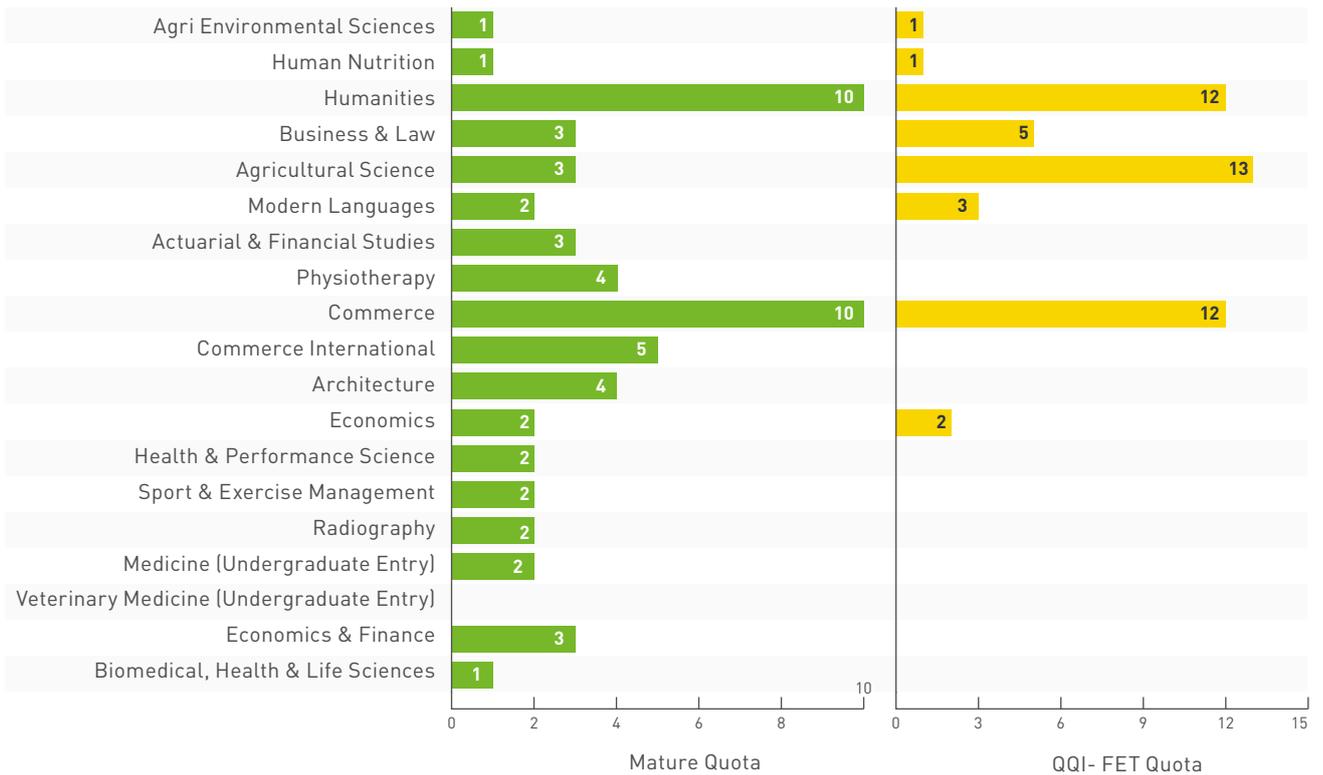
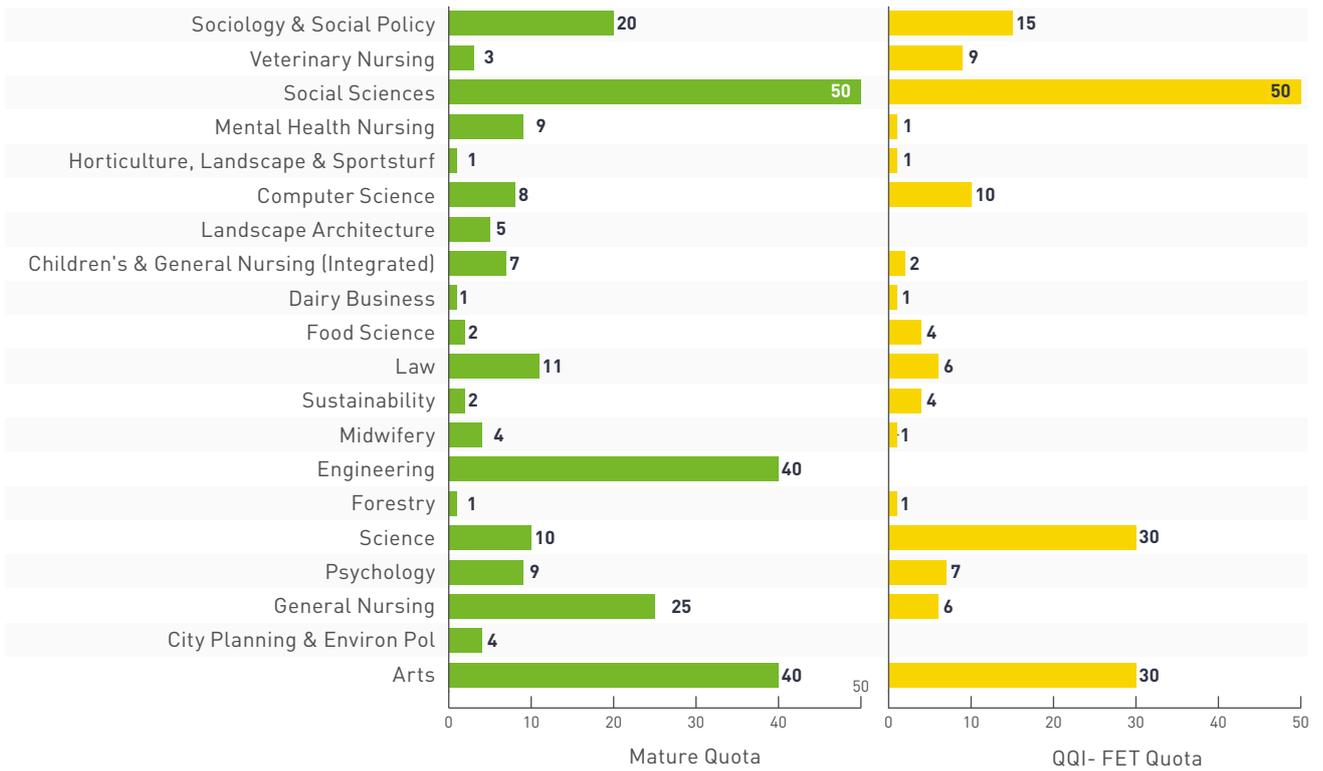


Admission Year	Places	Total Access Quota	Total Quota %	Total Access Route Accepts	Return to gen. allocation
2020	4,366	1,070	24.5%	857	213
2019	4,013	1,041	25.9%	726	315
2018	3,981	963	24.2%	619	344

Admission Year	DARE Quota	DARE Accepts below pts	HEAR Quota	HEAR Accepts below pts	Mature Quota	Mature Accepts	QQI-FET Quota	QQI-FET Accepts
2020	260	224	271	147	312	222	227	264
2019	249	202	254	138	322	169	216	217
2018	218	154	224	129	342	155	179	181

## HEAR, DARE, Mature and QOI FET reserved places by programme





**DARE  
Accepts**

**HEAR  
Accepts**

**Mature  
Accepts**

**QQI-FET  
Accepts**

2020

**224**

**147**

**222**

**264**

2019

**202**

**138**

**169**

**217**

2018

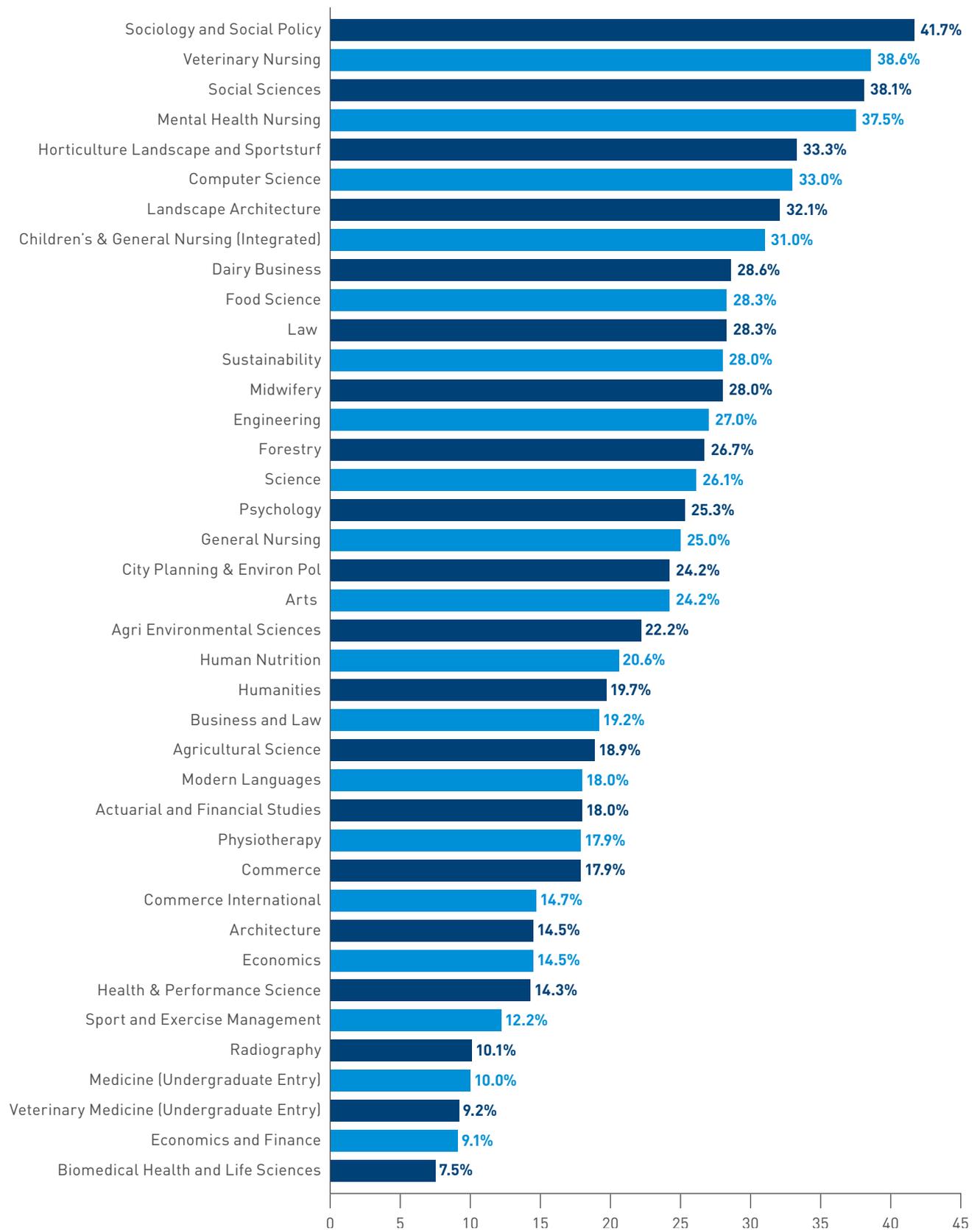
**154**

**129**

**155**

**181**

## Access Quota – Percentage by Programme



# 5B.

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# Participation



Participation data is made available to UCD Access & Lifelong Learning by the Director of Institutional Research in UCD, Maura McGinn. We have provided this data in disaggregated format for four years and this has been a significant lever for change in our University for All implementation. Participation data includes all students enrolled on a programme while admissions data only refers to new entrants through designated access pathways. Again we report on full-time undergraduate programme participation. Disaggregated data for programmes is only provided where there are more than 50 students enrolled on the programme but all undergraduate students are represented in the institutional figures.

The groups reported here align with those identified as underrepresented in Higher Education in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019. The groups and data sources are outlined below.

## Low Income

Students from socio-economically disadvantaged households. Up to and including 2018-19 this included students who were classified in socio-economic groups (SEG) D, F or G (SEG D: Non-manual, SEG F: Semi-skilled, SEG G: Unskilled), those who were eligible for HEAR and those who had previously engaged in UCD's Future You Mentoring Programme for linked DEIS schools. Following a change to the Equal Access Survey in 2019, the SEG indicators could no longer be identified and a change to the indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage was necessitated. The indicators used for this group from 2019-20 forward are:

- Award of a Cothrom na Féinne scholarship (a means-tested scholarship programme) or a 1916 Bursary (HEA PATH means-tested Bursary scheme). The Cothrom na Féinne scholarships are supported through UCD Foundation: the growth in the available scholarships is determined by the continued generosity of donors
- Students progressing from a post-primary school designated as DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools). This is an initiative of the Department of Education and Skills aimed at lessening educational disadvantage and bringing about social inclusion in primary and second level education.

- Students in receipt of the SUSI Special Rate denoting a household income not exceeding €24,000 to include eligible long-term Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection payment or its EU equivalent.
- Students entering through the HEAR pathway.
- Lone parents.

Data Source: Equal Access Survey (up to and including 2018-19), UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (scholarship/bursary recipients, Lone Parent funding recipients), UCD Registry (SUSI Grant status, DEIS school attendance, HEAR eligibility).

## Disability

Students who report a disability on the Equal Access Survey, enter UCD through the DARE pathway, and those who avail of disability supports offered by UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.

Data Source: Equal Access Survey, UCD Registry, UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.

## Mature

Students aged 23 years of age or over at 1st January prior to their programme entry date, who are entering a full-time or part-time undergraduate programme, for the first time (i.e. have no previous level 8 qualification).

Data Source: UCD Registry.

## Part Time

Students who undertake undergraduate studies on a flexible basis during the day, evenings, weekends, by distance or online, including Open Learning students.

Data Source: UCD Registry.

## QQI-FET

Students who enter UCD holding a QQI-FET (Further Education) award.

Data Source: UCD Registry.

## Refugees/Asylum Seekers

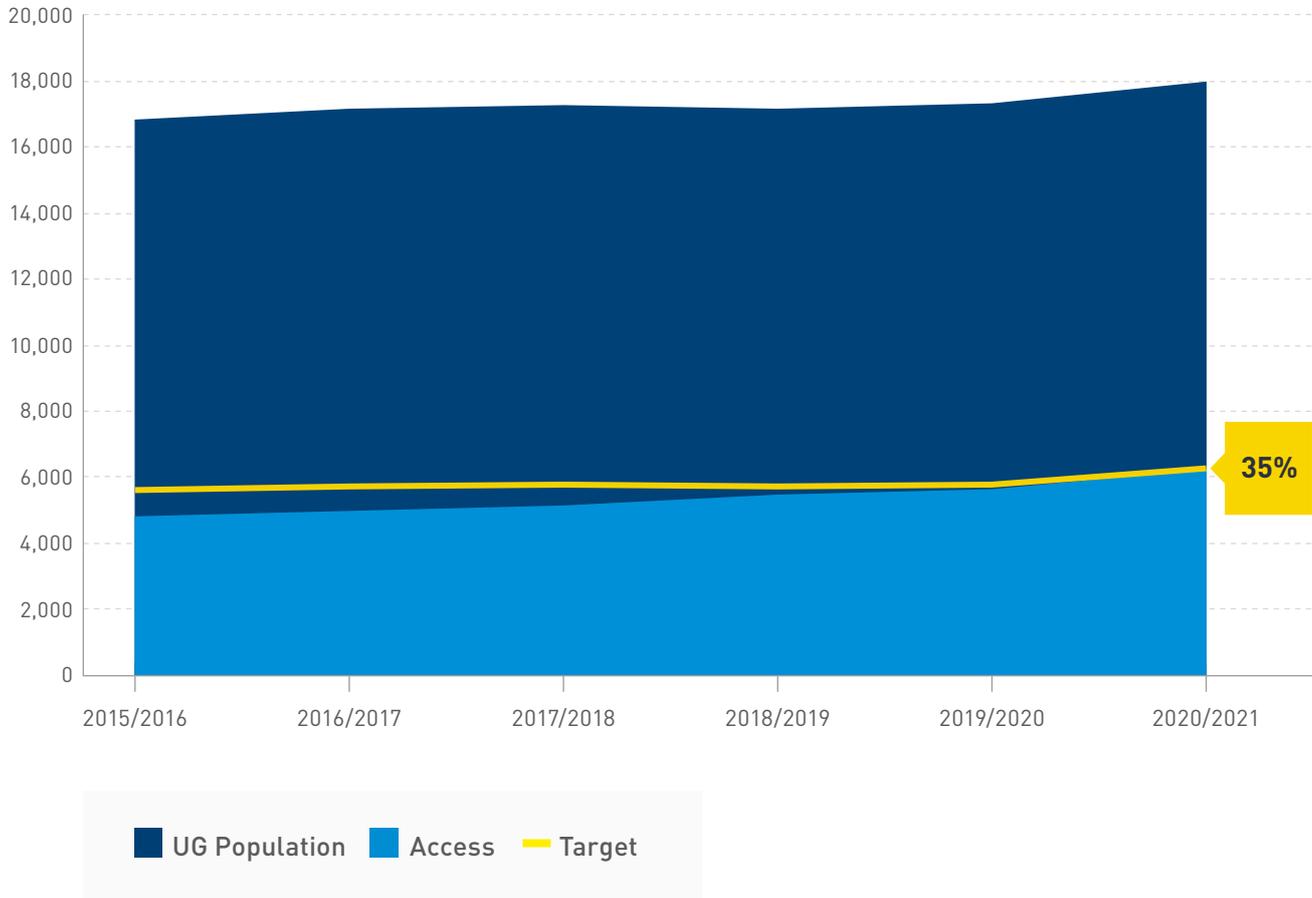
Students identified through disclosure on the Equal Access Survey and/or their participation in UCD's Sanctuary Support Programme for students who are refugees, asylum seekers or those given leave to remain.

Data Source: Equal Access Survey and UCD Access & Lifelong Learning.

## Trends, Patterns and Commentary

Our participation data is our most extensive data set as it includes the full UCD undergraduate student population. UCD's sustained focus on WP is reflected in the data and we are pleased to report that the number of access students has increased each year since reporting was initiated. Interrogating the data, it is clear that some groups are growing more rapidly than others. The group of students with a disability, for example, has seen exceptional growth. This is reflected in national figures reported annually by AHEAD which show that the participation of students with disabilities in higher and further education is continuing to grow (Ahead, 2021). Mature students are not seeing the same level of growth and in fact seem to have stabilised with a slight decrease evident in the six years of data presented here. Again, this is reflective of the national data trends but it has been suggested that this trend may change should Ireland's economic situation change. Our part-time numbers have seen an increase in the last two years in particular, in part due to the innovative work in UCD to develop and expand the Open Learning programme. Open Learning offers students a flexible way of studying part-time in UCD. Modules taken via Open Learning may in turn be used to gain entry to full time undergraduate study.

## Undergraduate Students – Access Data



Year	Total	Access	Access %	Low Income	LI %	Disability	Dis. %
<b>2020/2021</b>	17,968	6,223	34.6%	2,134	11.9%	2,743	15.3%
<b>2019/2020</b>	17,332	5,625	32.5%	1,938	11.2%	2,381	13.7%
<b>2018/2019</b>	17,186	5,492	32.0%	1,785	10.4%	2,176	12.7%
<b>2017/2018</b>	17,299	5,141	29.7%	1,449	8.4%	2,002	11.6%
<b>2016/2017</b>	17,192	4,979	29.0%	1,406	8.2%	1,623	9.4%
<b>2015/2016</b>	16,856	4,818	28.6%	1,320	7.8%	1,526	9.1%

Year	Mature	Mat. %	Part Time	PT %	QQI FET	QQI FET%	Refugee Asylum	Multi Access Student
<b>2020/2021</b>	1,714	9.5%	1,254	7.0%	707	3.9%	57	1,896
<b>2019/2020</b>	1,634	9.4%	1,199	6.9%	565	3.3%	60	1,724
<b>2018/2019</b>	1,717	10.0%	965	5.6%	449	2.6%	24	1,624
<b>2017/2018</b>	1,717	9.9%	980	5.7%	345	2.0%	5	1,357
<b>2016/2017</b>	1,821	10.6%	981	5.7%	329	1.9%	6	1,187
<b>2015/2016</b>	1,857	11.0%	1,062	6.3%	289	1.7%		1,236

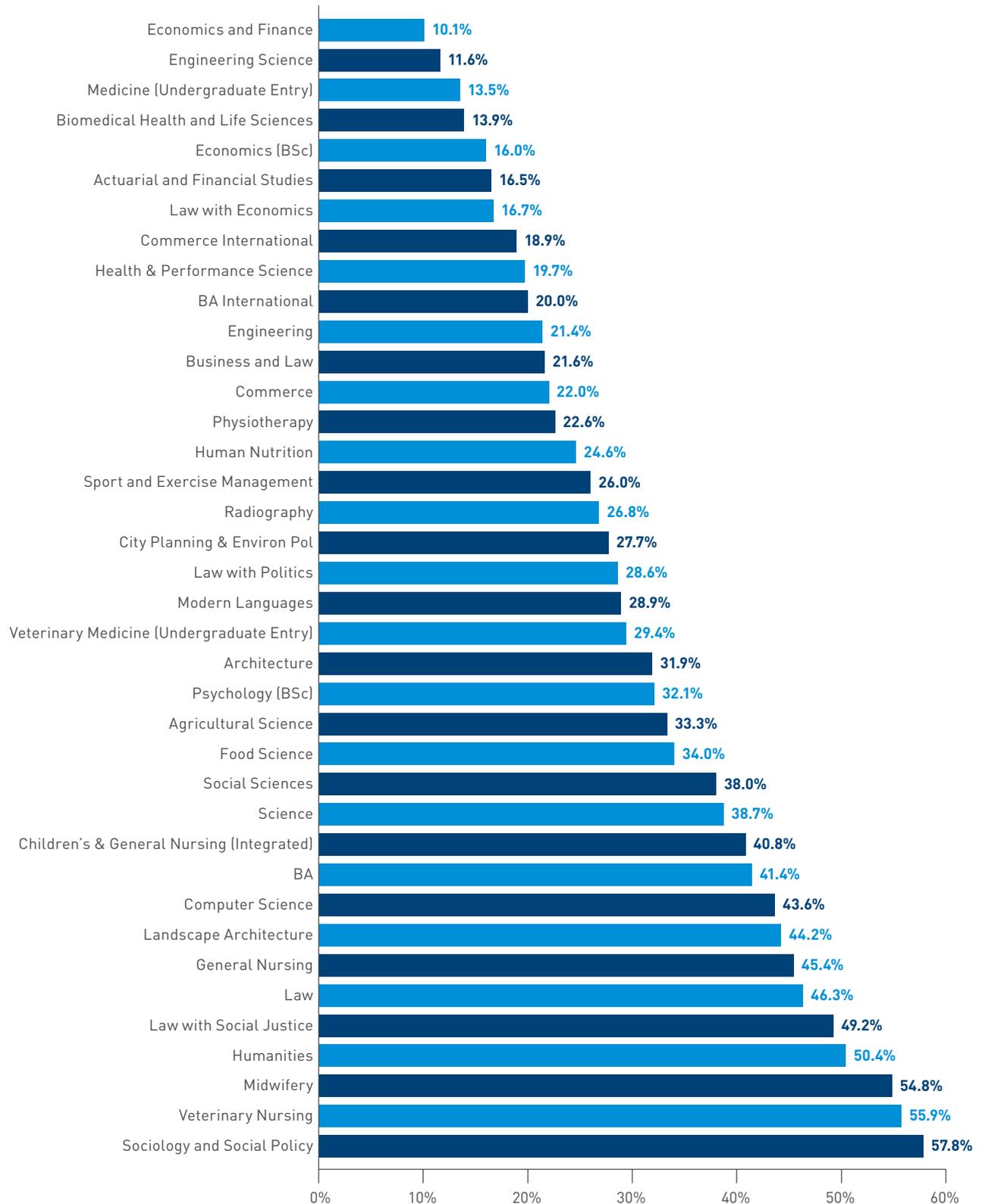


2020/21

34.6%

Total Undergraduate  
Access Participation

## Proportion of Access students by Programme



# 5C.

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# Progression, Retention & Completion

## Progression, Retention, Completion

Progression, retention and non-completion data on four main access admission pathways outlined above (HEAR, DARE, Mature, QQI-FET) is provided by Maura McGinn the Director of Institutional Research.

**Progression** is defined as the total number of a full-time undergraduate degree entering cohort who progress directly to second year at the end of their first year of study. A student progresses to the next year if the student completes and passes the final examination for that year or attains the required number of credits to progress. The undergraduate degree entering cohort is full-time undergraduate degree students entering first year for the first time.

**Retention** is defined as the total number of a full-time undergraduate degree entering cohort in a given year that remains in study in the following year.

**Completion** is defined as the total number of an entering cohort who are awarded a degree. When looking at completion rate it is important to note that some students could still be continuing in their programme and may therefore complete at a later date..

## Trends, Patterns and Commentary

Progression, retention and completion of students entering through access admissions pathways are broadly in line with the general UCD population. The trends are encouraging and demonstrate the success of access students in undergraduate programmes.

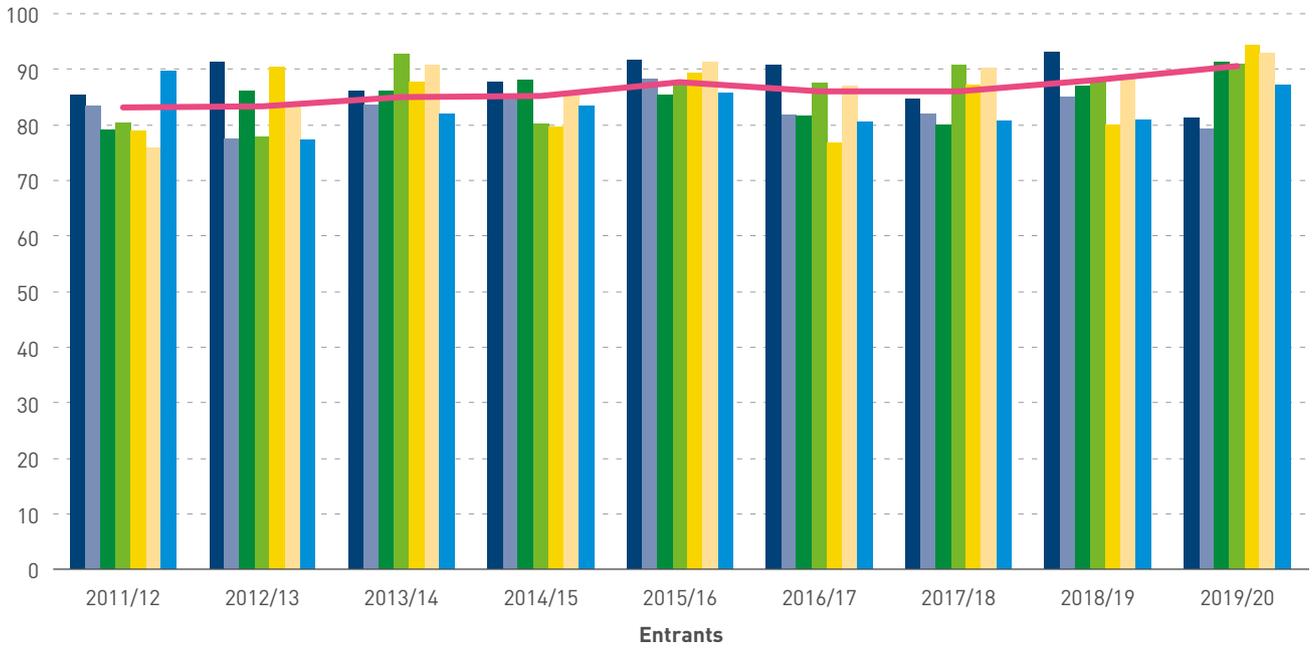
Progression of 2019-20 access students to second year shows a number of notable patterns. Most notably, students eligible for HEAR and students eligible for DARE, both above and below the CAO points requirement, are progressing at a higher rate than the UCD average. This clearly demonstrates the motivation of access students and the success which is possible for these under-represented student groups. Conversely, mature students who entered in 2019-20 progressed below the UCD average, as did those who entered through the QQI-FET pathway. This warrants further investigation.

Progression, retention and completion of those entering through the QQI-FET pathway are all below the university average and this trend can be seen for a number of years. The ALL student support professionals have begun a further investigation into the potential reasons for this trend. They are beginning to consult with students and staff/faculty via focus groups to determine which additional supports may positively impact the progression of these students, and whether these supports would be provided by the institution, their programme, or by ALL. Initial findings point towards the need for a sense of community among this group of students.

Another notable trend which can be seen from the progression data for entrants from 2015-16 to 2018-19 is the higher progression rate of both students entering through the HEAR and DARE pathways below the required CAO points. In these four years those eligible for HEAR and DARE who gained access to their chosen programme below the points required were more likely to progress and be retained in their programme. This pattern may demonstrate that motivation to participate in a programme (gaining entry to a programme higher up the student's list of preferences) is a better indicator of success than entering the programme with the required CAO points.

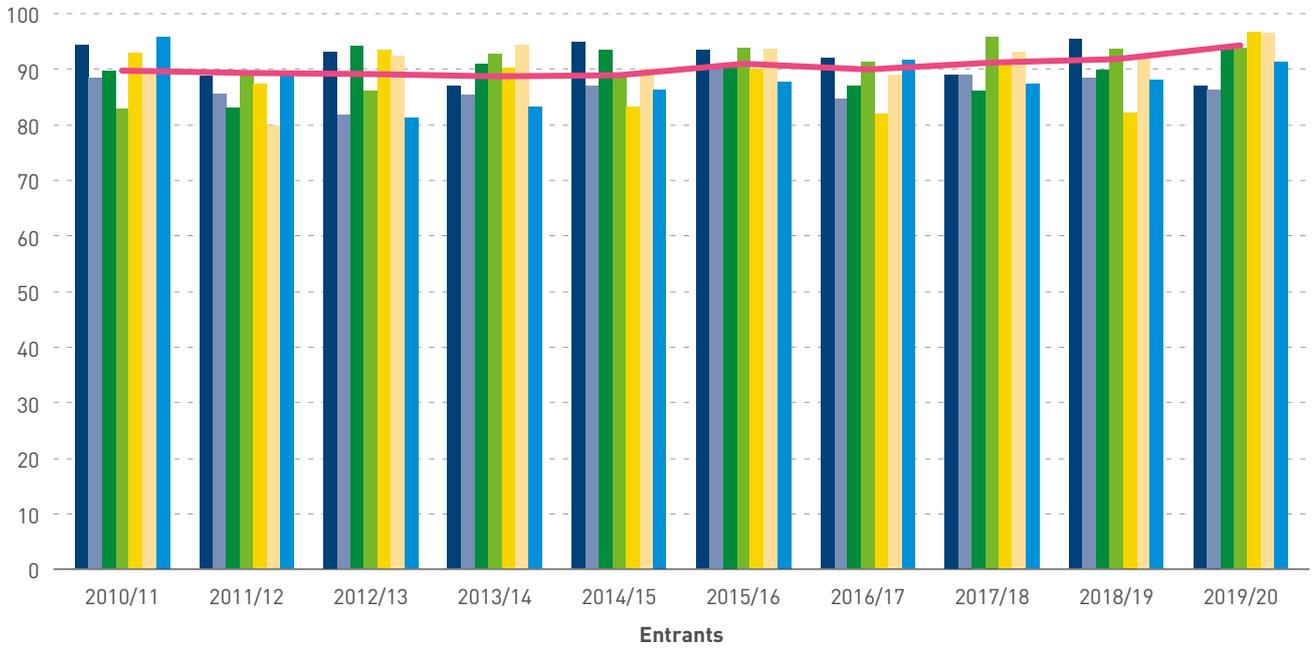
**Students eligible for HEAR and students eligible for DARE, both above and below the CAO points requirement, are progressing at a higher rate than the UCD average.**

## UCD Progression Rates (per 100 new entrants)



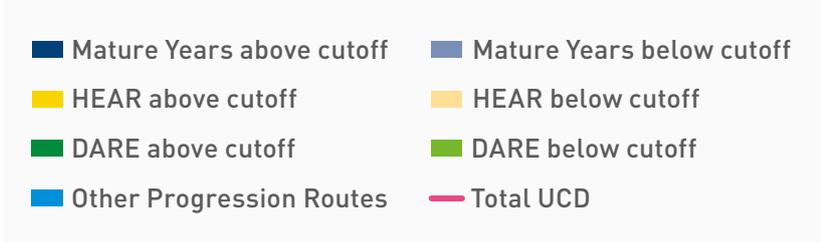
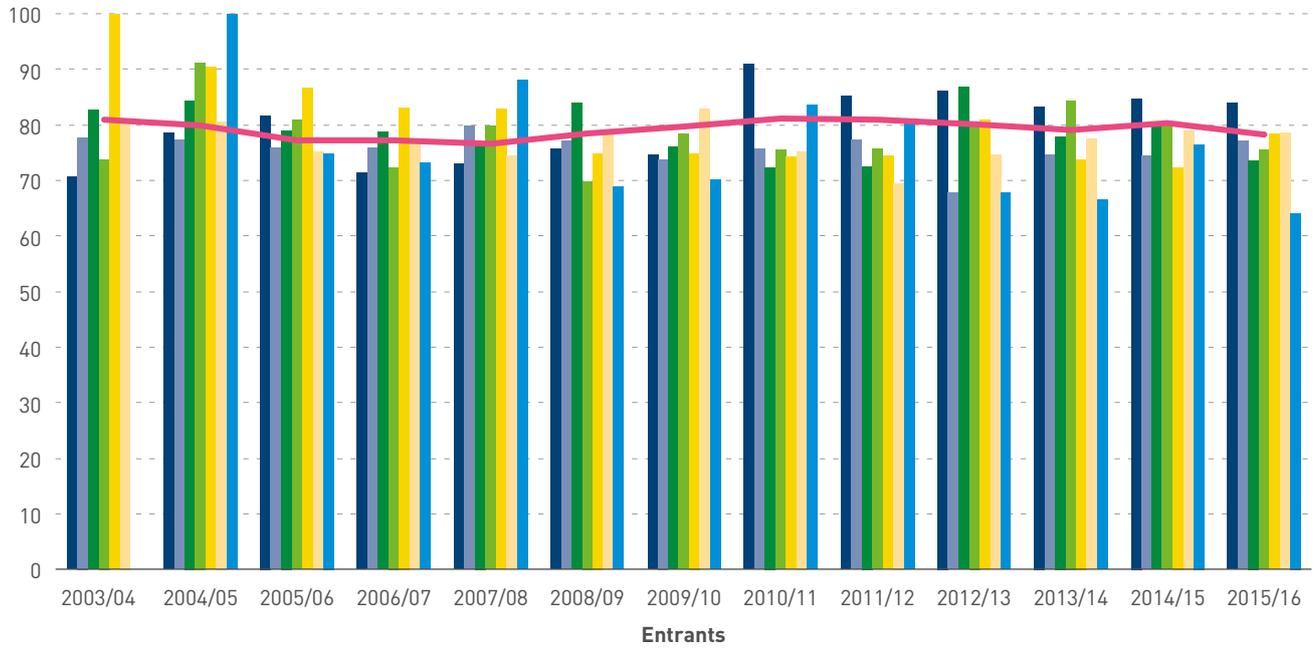
<b>Progression Rate (per 100 new entrants)</b>									
<b>Entry Cohort</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Under-represented Entrants</b>									
Progression Rate	80.6	81.8	85.4	83.4	87.4	82.1	84.4	85.1	87.4
<b>Mature Entrants</b>	84.1	81.5	84.4	85.8	89.7	84.9	83.1	88.0	79.9
Mature Years above cutoff	85.3	91.3	86.1	87.9	91.7	90.8	84.8	93.1	81.2
Mature Years below cutoff	83.5	77.4	83.7	84.8	88.3	81.9	82.1	85.2	79.3
<b>DARE Entrants</b>	79.7	83.1	89.1	85.0	86.4	84.1	84.0	87.5	91.1
DARE above cutoff	79.2	86.2	86.2	88.0	85.4	81.5	80.0	87.1	91.3
DARE below cutoff	80.3	77.8	92.9	80.2	87.8	87.6	90.7	87.9	90.8
<b>HEAR Entrants</b>	77.1	87.2	89.1	82.4	90.3	81.6	88.5	84.9	93.5
HEAR above cutoff	78.9	90.5	87.8	79.7	89.3	76.9	87.2	80.0	94.4
HEAR below cutoff	75.8	83.5	90.7	86.1	91.3	87.0	90.4	88.4	92.9
<b>Other Progression Routes</b>	89.6	77.4	81.9	83.6	85.7	80.6	80.8	81.0	87.2
FETAC	88.9	76.9	81.2	83.6	85.6	80.6	80.8	81.2	87.6
HETAC	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Progression	100	-	100	-	100	-	-	66.7	50.0
<b>Total UCD</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>87.7</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>86.0</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>90.6</b>

## UCD Retention Rates (per 100 new entrants)



<b>Retention Rate (per 100 new entrants)</b>										
<b>Entry Cohort</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Under-represented Entrants</b>										
Retention Rate	89.0	84.7	87.8	87.9	87.6	90.2	86.8	90.1	89.5	91.6
<b>Mature Entrants</b>	90.4	86.5	85.3	85.8	89.5	91.8	87.2	89.1	90.9	86.6
Mature Years above cutoff	94.4	88.8	93.2	87.0	94.9	93.3	92.0	89.1	95.4	87.1
Mature Years below cutoff	88.5	85.4	81.9	85.3	87.1	90.6	84.8	89.1	88.4	86.4
<b>DARE Entrants</b>	87.9	86.0	91.3	91.7	91.5	91.9	88.8	89.7	91.6	93.9
DARE above cutoff	89.7	83.1	94.3	90.8	93.3	90.5	87.0	86.1	89.9	94.0
DARE below cutoff	82.9	89.4	86.1	92.9	88.5	93.9	91.4	95.9	93.6	93.9
<b>HEAR Entrants</b>	90.6	82.9	92.9	92.2	86.2	91.8	85.3	92.1	88.1	96.5
HEAR above cutoff	93.0	87.3	93.3	90.2	83.3	90.0	82.1	91.2	82.2	96.7
HEAR below cutoff	89.4	79.8	92.3	94.4	90.1	93.7	89.0	93.3	92.2	96.5
<b>Other Progression Routes</b>	95.9	89.6	81.1	83.3	86.3	87.8	91.8	87.5	88.0	91.3
FETAC	95.3	88.9	80.8	82.6	86.3	87.6	91.8	87.5	87.8	91.7
HETAC	100	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Routes	-	100	-	100	-	100	-	-	100	50.0
<b>Total UCD</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>89.0</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>90.0</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>91.8</b>	<b>94.4</b>

## UCD Completion Rates (per 100 new entrants)



### Completion Rate (per 100 new entrants)

Entry Cohort	2003 /04	2004 /05	2005 /06	2006 /07	2007 /08	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16
<b>Under-represented Entrants</b>													
Completion Rate	78.0	80.8	78.6	76.0	78.7	77.6	74.0	76.1	75.4	75.3	74.8	76.2	74.5
<b>Mature Entrants</b>	75.9	77.8	77.3	74.9	78.5	76.9	74.1	80.7	80.0	73.4	77.5	77.7	80.1
Mature Years above cutoff	70.9	78.8	81.8	71.4	73.1	75.8	74.7	91.2	85.3	86.4	83.5	84.8	84.2
Mature Years below cutoff	77.9	77.4	76.1	76.0	79.9	77.3	74.0	75.8	77.6	67.9	74.7	74.6	77.2
<b>DARE Entrants</b>	80.2	86.2	79.6	77.4	77.2	82.4	76.5	73.2	74.1	84.6	80.8	80.1	74.5
DARE above cutoff	82.8	84.5	79.2	78.9	76.4	84.2	76.1	72.4	72.7	87.0	78.0	80.0	73.7
DARE below cutoff	73.9	91.3	81.0	72.4	80.0	70.0	78.6	75.6	75.8	80.6	84.5	80.2	75.5
<b>HEAR Entrants</b>	81.4	83.0	79.4	80.5	78.7	76.8	80.0	75.0	71.8	78.1	75.7	75.3	78.7
HEAR above cutoff	100	90.5	86.8	83.3	83.1	75.0	75.0	74.4	74.6	81.0	74.0	72.5	78.6
HEAR below cutoff	80.6	80.8	75.4	76.9	74.6	78.8	83.1	75.3	69.7	74.7	77.6	79.2	78.7
<b>Other Progression Routes</b>	-	100	75.0	73.3	88.2	69.0	70.3	83.7	81.3	67.9	66.7	76.7	64.3
FETAC	-	100	75.0	73.3	88.2	67.9	72.7	81.4	82.2	67.3	65.2	76.7	63.9
HETAC	-					100	50.0	100		100			
Other Progression	-						50.0		66.7		100		100
<b>Total UCD</b>	81.2	79.9	77.4	77.3	76.7	78.5	79.8	81.2	81.2	80.3	79.3	80.4	78.4

# 5D.

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# Outward mobility



Outward mobility data is provided by Maura McGinn, Director of Institutional Research.

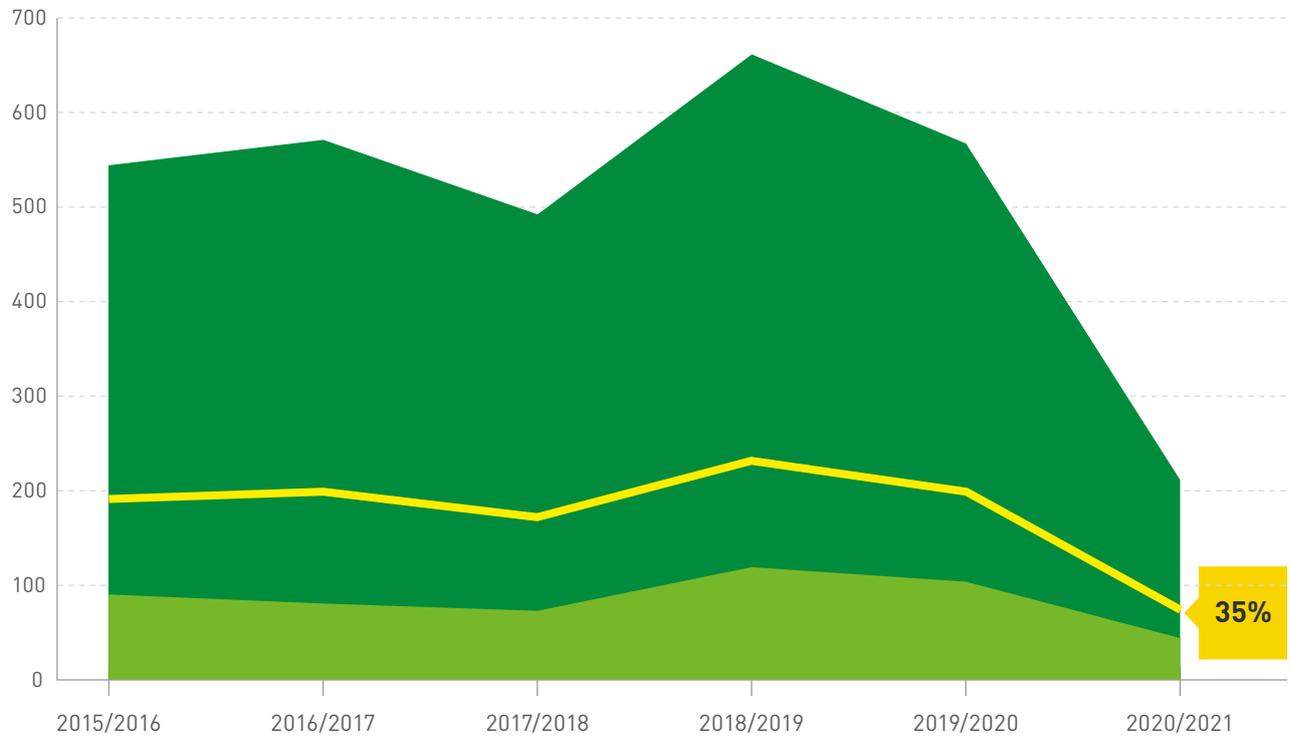
**Outward mobility** is defined as any Erasmus or study abroad programme with a duration of one trimester or more. Undergraduate data only is provided here. It should be noted that other intercultural learning experiences or programmes are on offer to students but only those that require travel to another country and enrolment in another university for the duration stated are captured in this data.

## Trends, Patterns and Commentary

Outward mobility offers students an exciting opportunity to expand their learning and their educational experience by studying in a different country and sometimes through another language. Outward mobility has become a marker of privilege of which many access students are unable to avail. Given the nature of the academic year 2020-21 and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic it is difficult to make significant observations from the data trends that year in outward mobility. However, from the data available it is clear that each year a greater percentage of those engaging in outward mobility are access students although the increase is small. Being able to travel abroad for part of your programme to a university in another country offers students the opportunity to engage in intercultural learning and all that goes along with it. In 2019-20 18.3% of those who engaged in outward mobility were from access groups - in comparison to 32.5% of the full undergraduate population being from access groups. Equitable access to study abroad and Erasmus opportunities has not yet been achieved although work is ongoing to address the gap evidenced in this data set - with working groups being set up between UCD Global and ALL.

UCD Global are examining how to widen participation in outward mobility including offering different types of global mobility including virtual intercultural learning experiences. We can see that part-time students are not currently engaging in outward mobility and very few mature students are able to avail of these opportunities. We have begun focus groups and other activities to explore what additional supports could be put in place to remove the barriers to outward mobility for access students whether they be financial, social, disability access or otherwise.

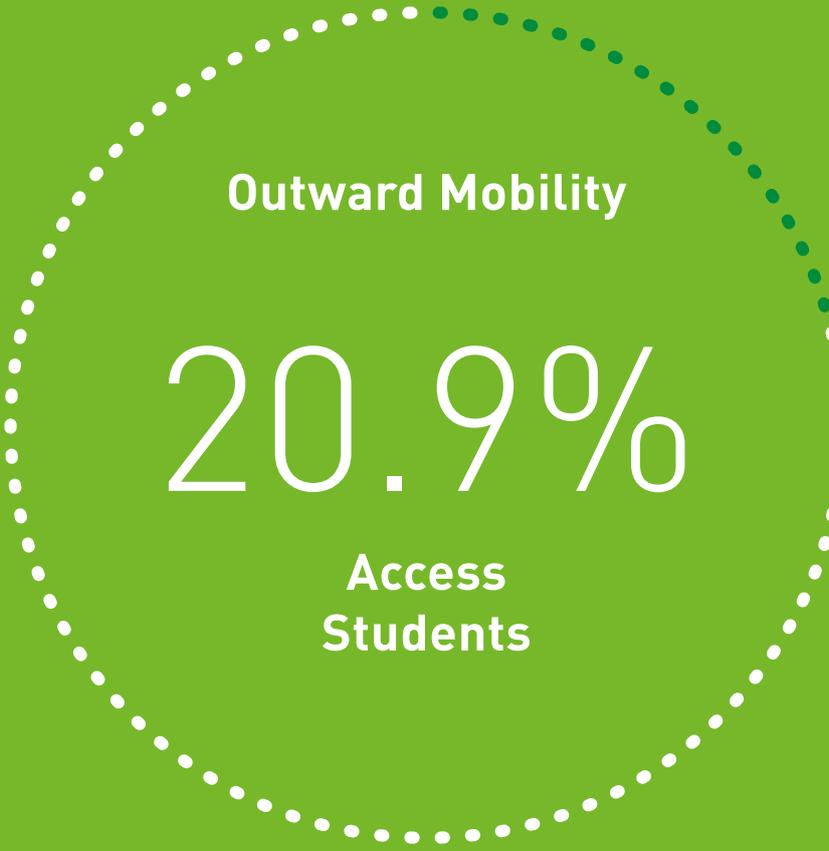
## UCD UG Outward Mobility



■ UG Population ■ Access — Target

Year	Total	Access	Access %	Low Income	LI %	Disability	Dis. %
2020/2021	211	44	20.9%	17	8.1%	25	11.8%
2019/2020	567	104	18.3%	30	5.3%	72	12.7%
2018/2019	661	119	18.0%	56	8.5%	71	10.7%
2017/2018	492	73	14.8%	34	6.9%	39	7.9%
2016/2017	572	82	14.3%	36	6.3%	39	6.8%
2015/2016	545	91	16.7%	43	7.9%	41	7.5%

Year	Mature	Mat. %	Part Time	PT %	QQI FET	QQI FET%	Refugee Asylum	Multi Access Student
2020/2021	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	4	9.1%	0	4
2019/2020	9	1.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	7
2018/2019	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	11
2017/2018	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	1	4
2016/2017	7	1.2%	0	0.0%	4	0.7%	0	4
2015/2016	11	2.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	5



**Outward Mobility**

**20.9%**

**Access  
Students**

# 5E.

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# Graduate outcomes



data is provided by UCD Careers Network. The Graduate outcomes survey is conducted annually with students who graduated during the selected calendar year. Survey information relating to a particular year is usually available around September of the following year. Please note also that due to Covid-19, the Graduate Outcomes Survey was not run for students who graduated in calendar year 2019. **Graduate outcomes** data captures the student journey after graduation, both graduate and undergraduate.

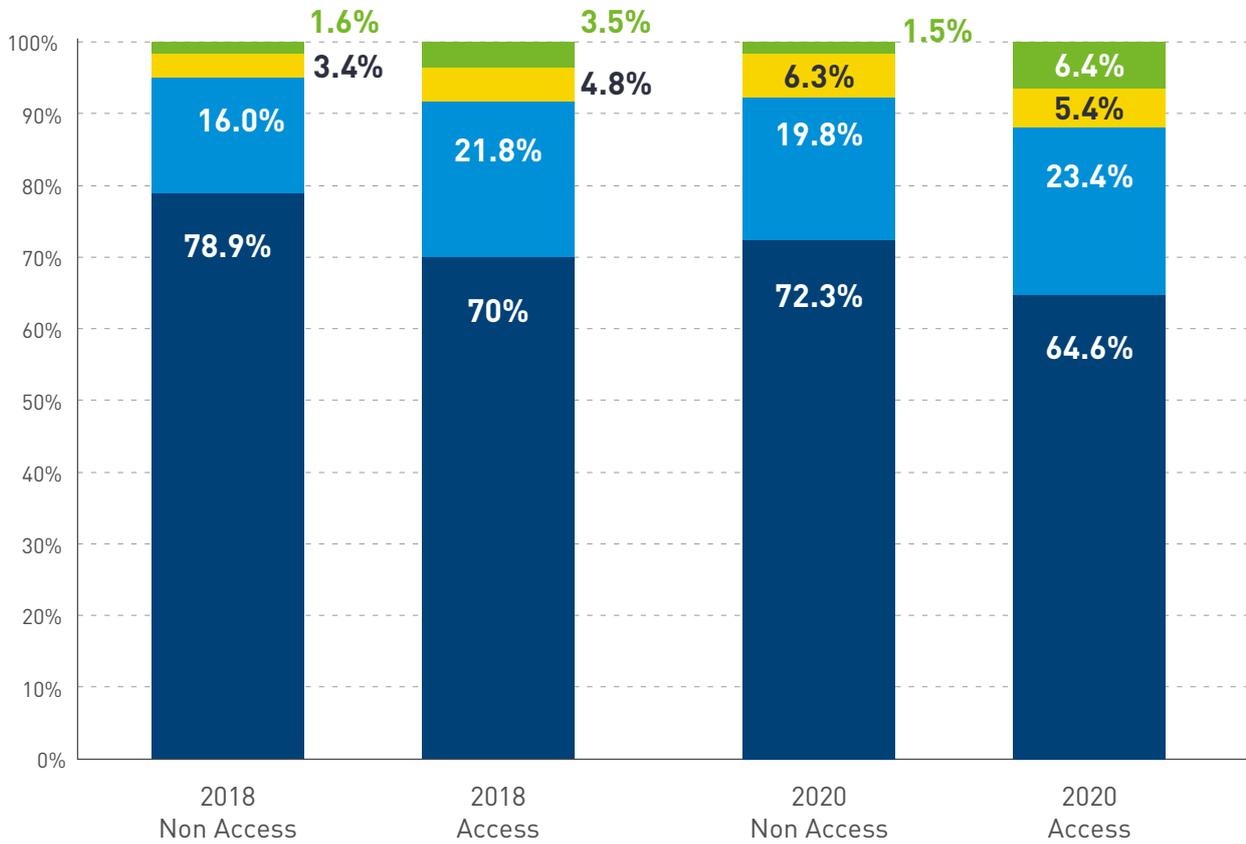
## Trends, Patterns and Commentary

Graduate outcomes are a critical metric in considering the full student journey. The data in this report was gathered by UCD Careers Network as part of their annual Graduate Outcomes Survey conducted with all UCD graduates. In 2018 UCD Careers were able to disaggregate this data using Access Pathway Admissions flags. The disaggregation is high level - access or non-access. The disaggregated data is available in UCD's centralised system (Infohub) to all staff and faculty of the university.

The patterns most notable from the two years of data currently available is the higher proportion of access graduates who are in further study and training rather than employment on both years. Of particular note is the relatively low employment rate for 2020 Access graduates - 64.6% compared to 72.3% of Non-Access graduates in the same year. One could argue that economic uncertainty and turbulence appears to be disproportionately impacting the outcomes of Access Graduates. Without additional disaggregation between access groups it is difficult to make meaningful observations about this trend. However, it should be noted that perhaps the likelihood of access students being engaged in an activity other than employment may, in part, be due to the difficulty graduates with disabilities experience finding employment (Nolan & Gleeson, 2017).

While there are some limitations in the categories being only 'access' or 'non-access', inclusion of this disaggregation is a significant addition to previous data offerings and offers insights into the outcomes for our graduates - employment, further study, seeking employment or other activities. We hope further disaggregation can be facilitated in later years. We also plan to use the more detailed data from this survey to assist with our Pathways to the Professions initiative which seeks to promote equitable outcomes in early career progression for access graduates, starting with Law and building a flexible responsive model applicable to all professions.

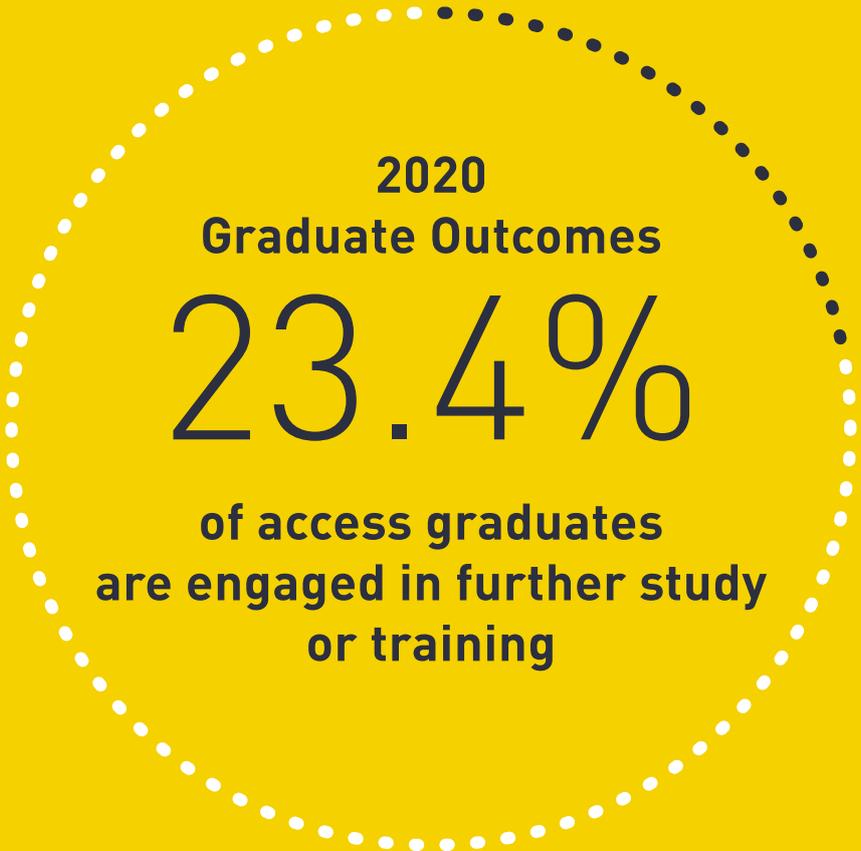
## Graduate Outcomes – Full Population



■ In Employment %
 ■ In Further Study or Training %
 ■ Seeking Employment %
 ■ Other Activities %

### Number of responses

College	In Employment	In Further Study or Training	Seeking Employment	Other Activities
<b>2020 Non Access</b>	2,520	689	221	53
<b>2020 Access</b>	262	95	22	26
<b>2018 Non Access</b>	3,493	708	150	76
<b>2018 Access</b>	404	126	27	20



2020

Graduate Outcomes

23.4%

of access graduates  
are engaged in further study  
or training

**5F.**

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**Access  
Groups  
and Inter-  
sectionality**

## Ethnic/Cultural Background

The table below shows the ethnicity/cultural background of undergraduate students as declared at the point of student enrolment through the Equal Access Survey.

<b>Ethnic/Cultural Background</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
<b>Irish</b>	3,444	3,401	3,431	3,430	3,469
<b>Irish Traveller</b>	5	5	5	3	9
<b>Any other White background</b>	199	165	215	231	252
<b>African</b>	19	31	32	36	37
<b>Other Black background</b>	3	4	4	6	2
<b>Chinese</b>	20	16	23	35	29
<b>Other Asian background</b>	40	52	44	65	65
<b>Other</b>	38	51	55	52	79
<b>Total Responding</b>	3,768	3,725	3,809	3,858	3,942

<b>Ethnic/Cultural Background</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
<b>Irish</b>	3,397	3,506	3,416	2,113	3,037	3,530
<b>Irish Traveller</b>	4	6	7	1	11	6
<b>Any other White background</b>	258	307	287	286	398	439
<b>African</b>	42	50	89	65	113	201
<b>Other Black background</b>	3	5	8	5	12	12
<b>Chinese</b>	76	69	130	153	541	132
<b>Other Asian background</b>	83	93	106	132	190	125
<b>Other</b>	69	84	97	109	167	50
<b>Total Responding</b>	3,932	4,120	4,140	2,864	4,469	4,495

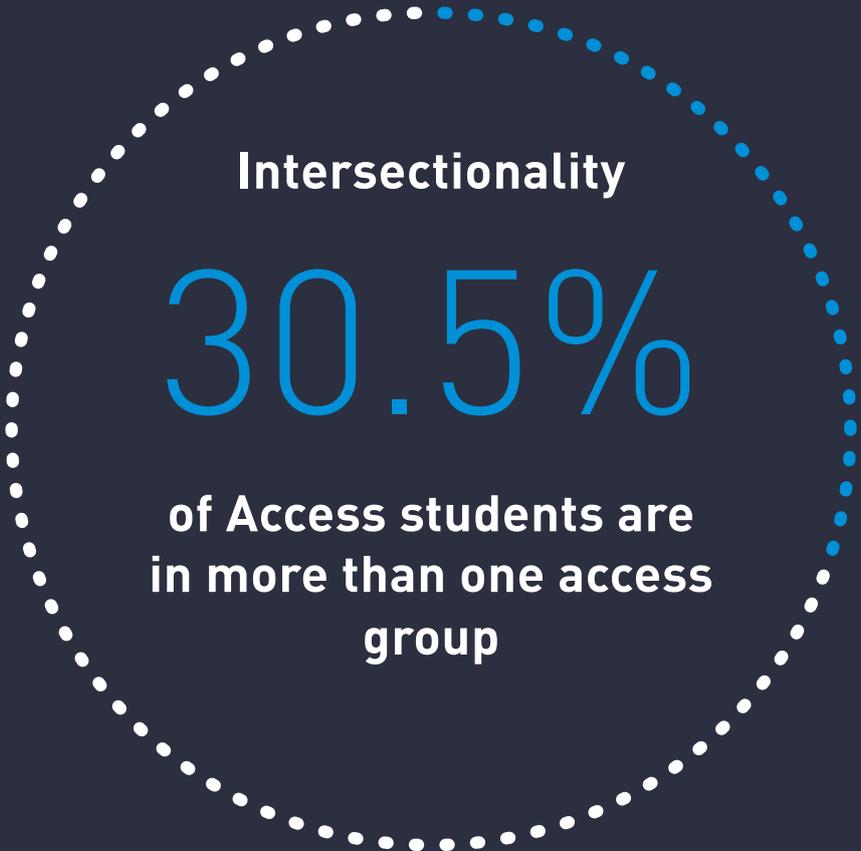
## Trends, Patterns and Commentary

It is clear more work needs to be done to increase participation from ethnic minorities - a point reflected in the National Access Plan and the Progress Review. While no specific targets have been set in relation to ethnic diversity in current and previous National Access Plans, we expect this may change in the upcoming National Access Plan, due to be published in 2022. In future reports we will integrate this ethnic diversity data into our other Widening Participation reports which will enable reporting on intersectionality with other access groups. 2020-21 saw a significant decrease in the number of Chinese students which may be an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in fewer students travelling internationally.

UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have established a Race and Ethnic Equality working group, a subgroup of the EDI Multicultural sub-group. Established in June 2020, the Race and Ethnicity working group is seeking “to gain a better understanding of UCD’s campus climate in relation to race and ethnic equality and to make recommendations” (UCD EDI Annual Report 2019-20, 2021). The inclusion of ethnicity in Athena Swan will likely also facilitate further progress in this area as well. Much like other areas of diversity, the reflection of ethnic and cultural diversity in the staff and faculty population will be an important enabler for a similar diversification of the student profile - another reminder of the importance of the ‘see one be one’ approach to diversify and inclusion across the university community.

## Intersectionality

It is clear from the data that the number of students in more than one access group is increasing year on year. In 2020-21 1,896 students were in multiple access groups - this represents 30.5% of access students. The increase in admissions targeted places for access students may be contributing to this increase including the prioritisation of those eligible for both HEAR and DARE admissions schemes. An analysis of intersectionality has shown that over 95% of part time students are also in another access category (most often mature students), over half of mature students are in another access category and more than three quarters of our refugee/asylum seeker students are in another access category. Over a third of those in the QQI-FET group were also in another access group and a quarter of those with disabilities are in another category. The lowest level of intersectionality is seen in the low-income group. 205 students were in three or more access groups (181 in three groups, 22 in four groups and 2 in five groups).



**Intersectionality**

**30.5%**

**of Access students are  
in more than one access  
group**

Within UCD Access & Lifelong Learning we have been using the intersectionality 'lens' to better understand the needs of our students and plan appropriate supports and interventions. One group we have given significant attention to has been those entering through the QQI-FET pathway from Further Education. Other than those who are refugees or asylum seekers this is the smallest group of access students and the one most rapidly growing - more than doubling since 2015-16. Because of trends seen in progression, retention and completion, outlined below, we completed an analysis of the demographics of these students. Lower levels of intersectionality than expected were evident. Almost all of these students were aged below 23 upon entry with the majority of the group being in the bracket 19-22 years. Most were Irish and over 58% were female. It is clear that traditional views of this pathway being one which widens access to under-represented groups is not borne out in UCD's data set to any significant extent.

We will continue to explore the intersectionality of our access students and disseminate data on this under-explored area of widening participation. This data assists us with dispelling myths about our access students as well aiding in the planning and execution of appropriate and targeted supports.

1896 Access Students in more than one group	Low income	Disability	Mature	Part-time	QQI-FET	Sanctuary
Low income	2,134	374	227	12	208	46
Disability	374	2,743	245	58	167	9
Mature	227	245	1,714	930	55	35
Part-time	12	58	930	1,035	1	5
QQI-FET	208	167	55	1	707	14
Sanctuary	46	9	35	5	14	57

06.

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# Qualitative Measurement of Inclusion and Additional Metrics

## University for All Survey

In June 2020 the University for All project team carried out university-wide staff and student surveys in order to provide baseline quantitative and qualitative data on the University community's perception of UCD as inclusive. Using the framework of the Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions we asked staff and students to share their perception and experience of inclusion in five core areas - Institutional Strategy, Policies and Procedures; Programme & Curriculum Design, Teaching & Learning; Student Support & Services; Physical Campus and the Built Environment; Technology Systems and Infrastructure. We gathered data using a Likert scale but also encouraged qualitative responses, of which we received many. In addition to these areas we measured awareness of the University for All initiative, perception of an increase in inclusion since joining UCD and finally we asked if respondents had a 'magic wand' for inclusion what change would they make. The rich data gathered in these surveys is being prepared for publication and has also been used extensively by Widening Participation Representatives in their University for All Implementation. We plan to repeat this survey periodically to gain insight into the impact of these implementation activities.

## Student Focus Groups and Panels

In order to create an inclusive university, the voice of students must be central to our planning and implementation. Student experience must be at the core of the University for All initiative. We conduct a wide range of exercises to ensure this is the case including regular focus groups and the inclusion of student panels at University for All Implementation workshops. Access students are also invited as members of our Widening Participation Committee and Sub-Committees. Each year we recruit UCD Access Leaders who are ambassadors and mentors for other access students, both current and prospective. UCD Access Leaders are students who are part of the access groups outlined in this report and are trained in a variety of skills including communication, mentoring, leadership, team work and advocacy. We understand the challenging nature of advocacy work and the value it holds in UCD; we are significantly indebted to our students who engage in this work. It is important to note that UCD Access Leader work is paid and recognised in a number of ways by the University including through the UCD President's Awards, UCD Advantage Awards and as part of a Diploma Supplement.

## University for All Implementation - Workshops and Implementation Plans

In April 2020 UCD's UMT Education Group approved the University for All Implementation Strategy. UCD's Widening Participation Representatives are leading the implementation of University for All in their programmes/units. University for All implementation workshops all include a self-assessment exercise based on the Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions. The Toolkit, developed by UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, is a key building block in the University for All initiative.

The steps to implementation include:

- 1.** Getting support from the Academic or Administrative Senior Leader e.g. College Principal, Dean, Director
- 2.** Establishing a Change Team to drive the project locally, including key colleagues e.g. VP Equality Diversity & Inclusion, VP Teaching & Learning etc.
- 3.** Planning a University for All Workshop (with support of the Senior Leader and Change Team). Previous experience has shown that attendance can be maximised when the invitation is disseminated by the local senior leader. The workshop is planned with consideration of local needs and priorities and can include:
  - Exploration of Widening Participation Data to include: Admissions, Participation, Progression, Completion, Outward Mobility and Graduate Outcomes. Change teams determine which data is most useful and how it should be presented (e.g. intersectionality of access groups, gender balance etc.)
  - Engagement with the Student Voice. UCD Access Leaders can offer their perspective on inclusion in UCD providing insight into the good practice currently ongoing and exploring how local areas can improve their practice.
  - Universal Design/Inclusive Practice training and development. UCD Access & Lifelong Learning can provide training in Universal Design and Inclusive Practice. Areas for development should be determined by the Widening Participation Representative and their Change Team.

- Toolkit Self-Assessment. This is the most important element of the University for All workshop. The self-assessment exercise assists with identification of areas of good practice and areas which should be prioritised for immediate or short/long term action.

4. Following the workshop an action plan is created identifying local University for All projects to be progressed. This action plan is then workshoped with the University for All project team before being presented to the local Senior Leader for approval.

Implementation workshops have transitioned online very successfully, with good attendance at workshops. A digital version of the Toolkit for Inclusive Higher Education Institutions was developed in Spring 2021 to enable for efficient capture of workshop self-assessment outputs.

During 2020-2021 seven University for All implementation workshops took place<sup>1</sup>:

- Arts & Humanities, led by Dr Mary Farrelly (Workshop held 10 December 2020, 12 in attendance)
- Agriculture and Food Science, led by Professor Olaf Schmidt (Workshop held 22 June 2021, 25 in attendance)
- Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy led by Associate Professor Brendan Williams (Workshop held 6 September 2021, 23 in attendance)
- Engineering led by Associate Professor Mark Flanagan (Workshops held 14 & 15 January 2021, 25 in attendance)
- Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, led by Dr Phil Halligan (Workshop held 22 June 2021, 30 in attendance)
- Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, led by Associate Professor Catriona Cunningham (Workshop held 12 March 2021, 35 in attendance)
- Science, led by Associate Professor Siobhán McClean (Workshop held 17 June 2021, 57 in attendance)

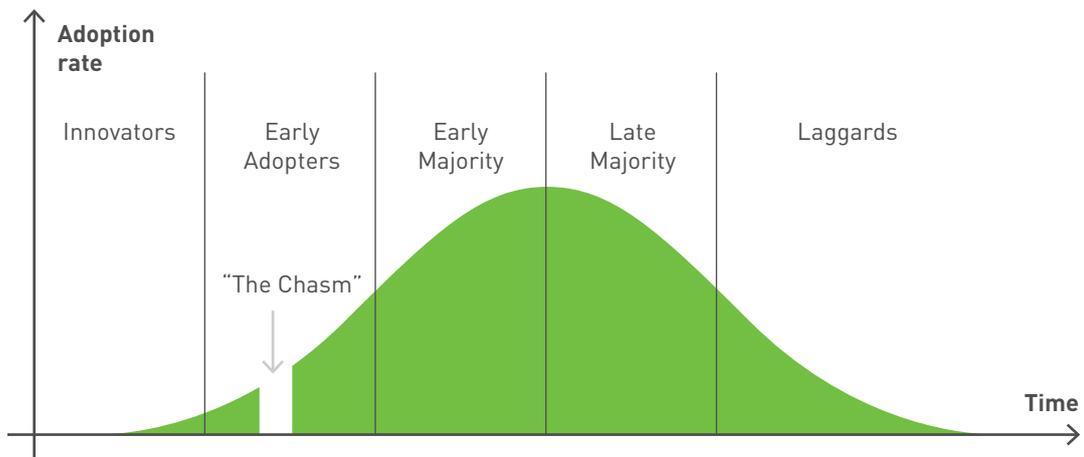
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<sup>1</sup> Additional workshops ongoing in later academic years.

In July 2021 Programme representatives submitted their University for All Implementation Plans. These plans were prepared by Widening Participation Representatives in collaboration with their local change teams using workshop output, data, student focus groups and other input. The implementation plans outline the progress made to date in each programme area and the plans for the future. These plans were published in the UCD Registrar's Intranet which is available to all UCD employees.

The implementation plans were analysed and key learners are summarised here.

- Disaggregated Widening Participation data has been very valuable in understanding the challenges faced by access students and this data has been widely shared across UCD Colleges and Schools. There is an appetite for further democratisation of this data through a central hub, which would have live or close to live, data available to all staff/faculty.
- Securing support from senior faculty within Colleges and Schools is vital in achieving buy-in from faculty and is hugely beneficial in communicating the University for All message.
- Widening Participation Representatives comment frequently on the importance of working closely with VPs for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, VPs/Heads of Teaching & Learning, and UCD Access & Lifelong Learning to avoid duplication of effort and benefit from shared knowledge.
- A common challenge reported by Widening Participation Representatives that they are 'preaching to the choir', i.e. delivering the message to those who are already invested in University for All. This points to a need to develop a staged approach to successful innovation, that takes account of early adopters, and develop strategies to extend ownership and buy-in (Rogers, 2003).



**Figure: Rogers' Model of Diffusion of Innovation**

- Furthermore, it is clear that Widening Participation Representatives would benefit from having the opportunity to share experience, knowledge and learning with each other (Wenger, 1998). In response to this a support model is now being trialled which includes regular information sharing through both formal and informal channels.

## National Forum Digital Badge for Universal Design of Teaching and Learning

Universal Design is a core component of the University for All initiative in UCD. Using the framework and principles of Universal Design we can create an inclusive educational environment to benefit all students. In Autumn 2020 UCD Access & Lifelong Learning entered into a strategic partnership with AHEAD to jointly deliver the Digital Badge for Universal Design in Teaching and Learning in a fully online format to a national audience. This National Forum Digital Badge was jointly designed by AHEAD and UCD ALL. This digital badge course provides participants with a strong introduction to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework and gives them the opportunity to implement UDL approaches within the teaching activities they are currently undertaking.

In UCD this digital badge is integrated into a module of the UCD Teaching & Learning University Teaching Qualification. The integration and promotion of Universal Design for Learning is a core element of the University for All initiative in UCD. Our strategic partnership with AHEAD allows us to broaden the reach of the UDL badge and promote our University for All message to a national audience to encourage others to implement a whole-institutional approach to student inclusion.

We have been facilitating the UDL Badge since we jointly developed it as part of the National Forum's professional development framework in 2017 but in 2020 we partnered with previously trained UDL badge facilitators to offer this course to over 600 participants simultaneously in the Higher Education and Further Education and Training sector - the largest national roll out of UDL CPD ever undertaken in Ireland. This MOOC style facilitation of the digital badge has had a wide-ranging impact on the sector with local UDL implementation significantly increasing. Another national roll-out of the badge is underway for 2021 with over 1,000 participants.

## University for All Faculty Partnership Programme

To accelerate the implementation of Universal Design throughout the University, ALL in collaboration with UCD Teaching & Learning and UCD Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, created the University for All Faculty Partnership Programme, which is funded by the HEA. This programme offers a structured opportunity to undertake the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training, to qualify as a UDL Facilitator, and become a role model who will persuade and influence others as to the merits of inclusion for all students.

17 Faculty Partners were appointed in June 2021:<sup>2</sup>

- College of Arts & Humanities: Associate Professor Naomi McAreavey
- College of Business: Dr Linda Dowling-Hetherington, Mr Allen Higgins
- College of Engineering & Architecture: Dr John Healy, Dr Jennifer Keenahan, Associate Professor Vikram Pakrashi
- College of Health & Agricultural Sciences: Dr Freda Browne, Professor Deirdre Campion, Associate Professor Caitriona Cunningham, Dr Tom Flanagan, Dr John Gilmore, Dr Phil Halligan, Dr Karen Keaveney, Dr Deirdre O'Connor
- College of Science: Dr Anthony Cronin
- College of Social Sciences & Law: Associate Professor Kevin Costello, Dr Muireann Ní Raghallaigh

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing, 10 additional Faculty Partners have been appointed in academic year 2021-22.

## Case Studies and Disseminating Good Practice

In 2016 we began a project to collect and disseminate case studies demonstrating good practice in the area of inclusion in teaching, learning and assessment aligned with the Universal Design for Learning framework. To date we have published three collections of case studies with a fourth scheduled for publication in 2022.



Padden, Lisa, O'Connor, John and Barrett, Terry (Eds) (2017). [Universal Design for Curriculum Design: Case Studies from University College Dublin](#). Dublin: Access and Lifelong Learning University College Dublin

This publication showcases 10 case studies from across UCD in a range of disciplines. The case studies are all developed around the framework of Universal Design which seeks to ensure all students have the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. The initiatives are in three sections:

- Major Curriculum or Student Support Innovations
- Classroom Teaching and Learning Processes and Materials
- Assessment

In each case study the authors have provided clear advice on how their initiatives can be implemented by others in Higher Education with a focus on student engagement, retention and success.



Padden, Lisa, Tonge, Julie, Moylan, Therese, O'Neill, Geraldine (Eds) (2019). [Inclusive Assessment and Feedback: Case Studies from University College Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design and Technology](#). Dublin: Access and Lifelong Learning University College Dublin

This publication is the result of successful collaboration between UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, UCD Teaching & Learning and IADT. The 15 case studies included in this publication include examples of good practice and innovation in the area of inclusive assessment and feedback. Authors from IADT and UCD share their innovative approaches allowing readers to learn how assessment can be made inclusive in practice. The approaches include inviting students to be partners in assessment, developing authentic and creative assessment methodologies, using assessment as a tool for student skills development and reimagining assessment to be shared across modules within a discipline. All case studies include advice for others interested in making their assessment inclusive and all also align with the framework of Universal Design for Learning.



Padden, Lisa, Buggy, Conor and Shotton, Elizabeth (Eds) (2021). [Inclusive Teaching & Learning Case Studies in Engineering, Architecture & Affiliated Disciplines.](#)

Dublin: Access and Lifelong Learning University College Dublin

This publication is the result of successful ongoing collaboration of colleagues across the UCD College of Engineering and Architecture. The six case studies presented focus on the implementation of Universal Design for Learning in these specific disciplines and is the result of the Inclusive Teaching Pilot born out of the College's Athena Swan Action Plan. We plan to add to these case studies as the pilot expands its reach in the coming years and those changes put on hold due to Covid are implemented. Our goal in providing these studies is to demonstrate real world evidence-based examples of inclusion in these disciplines. The case study authors provide numerous practical and replicable approaches which other educators could easily embed in their own teaching to embed inclusion. The shared resources include rubrics, activities, assessment briefs and many other items which readers are free to adapt and use in their own teaching.

## Student Contacts and Supports

The UCD Access & Lifelong Learning team supports access students and prospective students throughout their learning journey. Various support colleagues within Access & Lifelong Learning use UCD's contact record system, Unishare, to record contacts with students. Through Unishare it is possible to record contacts by category and subcategory for current students and graduates. We are currently exploring how we can capture contacts from prospective students as capture through Unishare is not currently possible for this cohort.

In the academic year 2020-21 ALL staff engagement with students increased by 15.6% relative to the year before. Support Staff in ALL developed an online drop-in system where students could drop-in for advice using virtual platforms to facilitate those studying and working remotely. This service was consistently busy throughout the COVID period. Students were offered a range of alternatives to face-to-face interactions, including e-mail, telephone and Zoom meetings. Different target groups opted for a range of interactions. There were over 7800 online contacts made with ALL Staff during the academic year 2020-21.

Method of Contact	Number of Contacts		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
<b>Desk</b>	2095	2129	451
<b>Email</b>	2414	3727	6034
<b>Phone</b>	205	228	886
<b>Video/ Meeting</b>	459	423	410
<b>Misc</b>	106	260	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	5279	6767	7822

## ALL Student Supports 2020-21

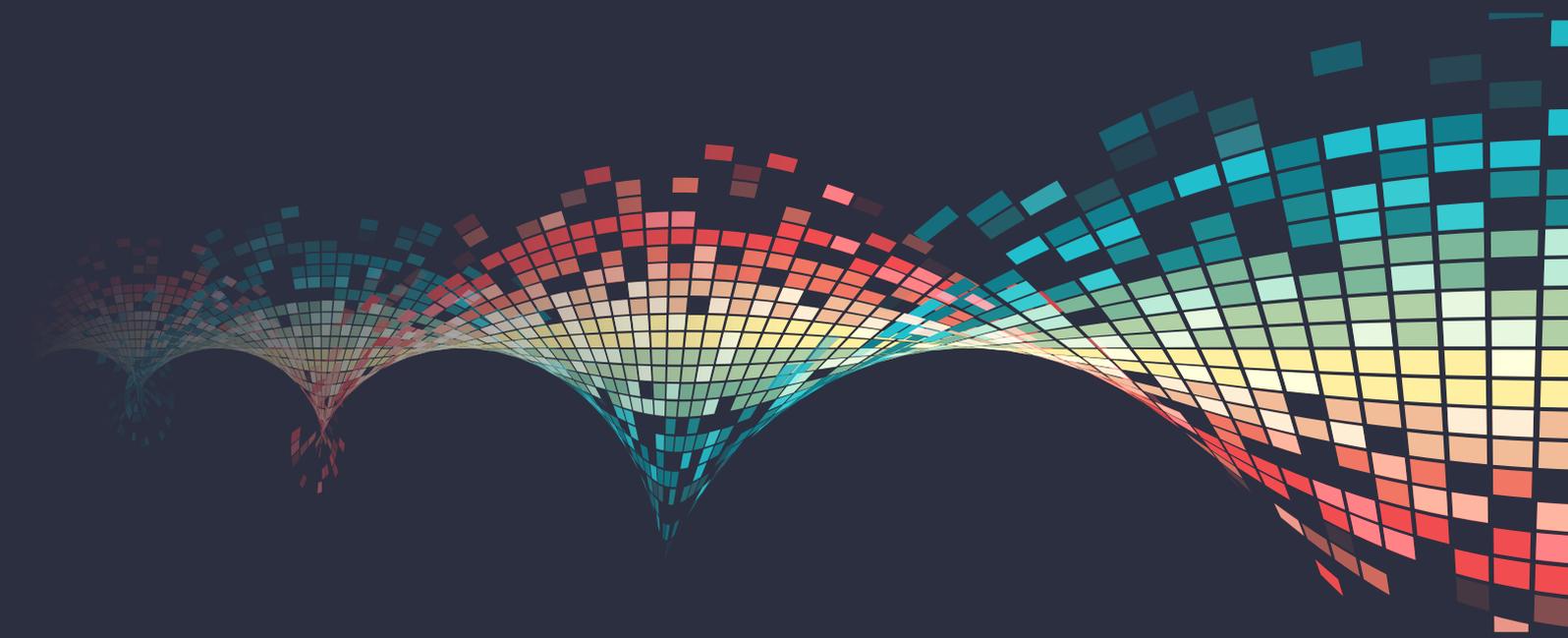
	<b>Student Group</b>	<b>2020/21 Total*</b>	<b>Details</b>
	Students receiving disability support	1,824 (476)	663 Needs Assessments completed to date and ongoing meetings and follow-ups as determined by the student. 84 AT consultations.
	Graduate students with disability	246 (52)	
	Mature Students	677 (128)	All New Entrants contacted with option for 1:1 and ongoing support where requested. Virtual meetings and virtual drop ins offered daily. Webinars, workshops and informal social events organised.
	Further Education Students	688 (250)	Integrated in Online ALL Welcome and supported by Programme Student Advisers.
	University Access	92	Offered Face-to-Face Boot Camp and weekly online support classes. Informal social meetings set up throughout trimester.
	Open Learning	239	Offered 1:1 pre-entry. Given virtual Welcome session and ongoing supports. Drop in and are referred as appropriate.
	Low income	892 (264)	Each New Entrant contacted and offered 1:1 Zoom meetings and updates. All students included in Laptop Loan Scheme application. Online Book tokens and financial supports promoted and distributed.
	Refugee /Asylum Seekers	48	1:1 meetings and ongoing check-ins, support and referral through ALL keyworker.
	Lifelong Learners	709	A proportion of Lifelong Learners contact the ALL centre to register, connect or attend Zoom training/support.
	Lone Parents	91	Are supported by Adviser.

\*Total contacts - new entrants shown in brackets

# 07.

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# Next Steps - What Now?



# Next Steps

UCD Access & Lifelong Learning have established four key objectives in our next steps for data gathering, dissemination and analysis.

## Intersectionality

As the number of students in more than one equity group increases year on year and this is reflected in the complexity of the student supports provision, it is clear that we will need to do additional analysis and research with these students who in the past may have been referred to as “double disadvantaged”. Our analysis so far has shown that in fact many students are in more than two equity groups and there is potential for more to be done to target and tailor supports for these students who, for example, may have financial difficulties while also having a disability while managing various caring commitments outside of their life at university. Starting with an understanding of the data on intersectionality we can work with students through focus groups and University for All projects to ensure that the experience of these students is central in our work to ensure that UCD is an inclusive environment, removing barriers and promoting equity. We have begun this work looking at both students who enter UCD with a QQI-FET pathway and mature students; looking at the intersectionality in these groups has provided our teams with useful insights which will allow for a greater tailoring of approach both in pre-entry outreach and in student support. In future reports we hope to offer additional data on intersectionality.

## Outward Mobility

While the Covid-19 pandemic reduced outward mobility in the Higher Education sector globally, it is still clear that there is an inequity in the ability to avail of this opportunity. UCD Access & Lifelong Learning, the Widening Participation Committee and UCD Global are now working together to identify how these opportunities can be provided equitably. Using the data in this report as well as qualitative data gathered at student focus groups we are identifying the barriers to engaging in outward mobility and, more importantly, identifying how these barriers can be removed or reduced.

This work will continue in earnest as we collaborate with students in establishing the points on their educational journey where additional support and, crucially, institutional change are necessary to level the playing field. Additional outward mobility opportunities are being made available which don't require a full semester or year abroad. These may assist with increasing inclusion; however, we cannot lose sight of the current inequity and the benefits a full semester or year abroad can offer a student. We hope to be able to provide data on these additional opportunities in future reports.

## Graduate Access Data

For many years we have worked on gathering and refining our approach to access data with our undergraduate student population. Increasingly, however, Programme Boards and other stakeholders are looking to the graduate space. The National Access Plans have set targets at undergraduate level to date but this is likely to change in future plans. In UCD, we have begun to look at how we can gather the necessary data for access groups and having done some preliminary work it is clear that we are not seeing the same level of diversity at graduate level as we are now seeing at undergraduate level. Additional work will be done on this in the coming years with a hope we can begin to provide disaggregated graduate programme data in the near future. This will allow for further targeting of supports, facilitate scholarship provision and ultimately focus our University for All work beyond the undergraduate to the graduate level ensuring we continue to seek equity of opportunity for all access students.

## Increased Democratisation of Data Internally

This data report is an important step in the further democratisation of this data internally in UCD. Our Widening Participation Representatives have worked hard to democratise this data at University for All workshops, Programme Boards, School Meetings and through other avenues. This report represents a significant step forward in providing one key resource covering all disaggregated programme data (where programmes have at least 50 students) which is available to all staff and faculty internally through the Registrar's Intranet. It is our hope that we will be able to further integrate the data in this report in UCD's existing data portal on Infohub but in the interim this report will provide a valuable resource.

# Concluding Comments

“It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.” (Sherlock Holmes - Arthur Conan Doyle)

One of the key benefits of reporting on our data is that it has helped us establish a robust base for both our policies and practices. The data serves as evidence to help the institution interrogate whether those policies and practices are equitable and whether specific equity groups are benefitting from HE. Our progress has allowed us to benchmark our work, celebrate the improvements, note the gaps in performance and prompt more strategic thinking on access and inclusion. Essentially, using Sherlock Holmes’ wisdom, our data has generated theories and approaches to creating our University for All.

Consequently data gathering and reporting has been central to focusing our institutional efforts in widening participation. In the last decade we have come to recognise that data is more than just numbers and metrics. The data represents so many other aspects of our work. This report has offered an overview of the contribution data makes in informing, prompting, shaping and provoking action and interventions. The data has moved us from story telling about our work to being able to draw on the data for evidence to illustrate the impact of our work. Critically, the data gaps prompt us to action.

The use of contextual data during the admissions process illustrates the benefits of targeting and identifying potential students. The democratisation of the data gives colleagues an insight into the demographics of their student groups. This disaggregation and clarity offers new opportunities to programmes and initiatives to reflect on their planning and adjust accordingly.

The process has helped us to identify areas of equality and prompted us to initiate projects and initiatives. It has also served us in reporting on compliance to meet funding and legislative requirements.

This data publication illustrates the potential of data and the importance of knowing who counts, and how to use that data.

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# Who Counts?

## University for All Data, Metrics, and Evidence 2020-2021

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“I believe that the data collected here is an essential part to achieving a University for All. Without such data students similar to me from disadvantaged backgrounds are overlooked and overseen, this is not what we want. The system cannot and will not improve unless change is encouraged. This data allows all students to be represented in an equal manner. It means that any barriers or blockers, which are detrimental to the overall college experience, will be assessed and changed in order to allow all students a fair opportunity at their academic studies.

From my perspective as both a university student and a student who is coming from the HEAR pathway, I believe this data is not only crucial to incite change for students but it will also promote awareness, awareness that not all students are equal, we did not all run the same race for our spot in university, however with change and with adaptation we can all finish the race at the same pace.”

- Lorraine Dunster, UCD Access Leader & Stage 3 BA Student

# Who Counts?

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