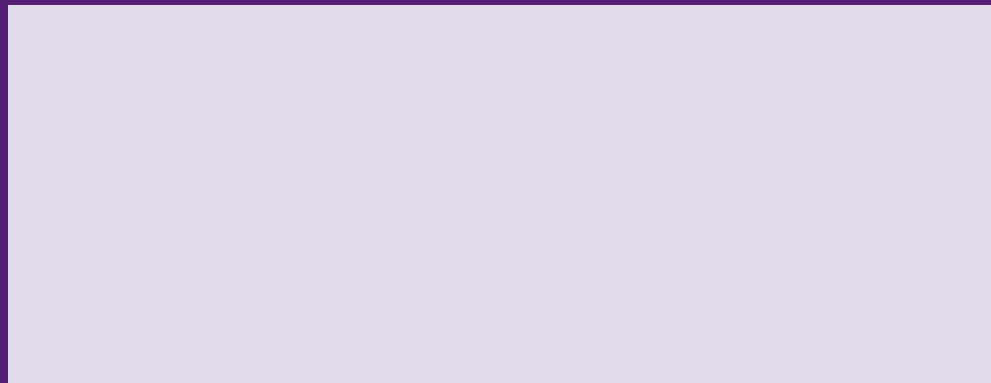


Intersectionality in Scottish higher education institutions: examining socioeconomic status and protected characteristics



Acknowledgments

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) would like to thank Elisabet Weedon and the Centre for Research in Education Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Edinburgh for undertaking the research to inform this report.

Further information

David Bass
info@ecu.ac.uk

Intersectionality in Scottish HEIs

Examining socioeconomic status and protected characteristics

Contents

Introduction and overview	1
Who is this report for?	2
About the data	2
Main findings	4
Intersectionality	6
Why are we interested in intersectionality?	6
A working definition	6
Subject areas and institutions	7
Age	10
Differences between institutional type	11
Subject area differences	12
Disability	13
Differences between institutional type	15
Subject area differences	16
Ethnicity	18
Differences between institutional type	20
Subject area differences	21
Gender	22
Differences between institutional type	23
Subject area differences	24
Terminology	25

Introduction and overview

The higher education sector in Scotland is increasingly recognising the importance of intersectionality and the complexities of discrimination arising from the links between socioeconomic background and equality in relation to student access.

Institutions aiming to identify underrepresentation, increase participation or equalise attainment gaps value more nuanced understandings of equality groups. Women or black and minority ethnic students are not homogenous groups with uniform identities; more detail and better intersectional data will allow for more focused and effective initiatives and activities.

Over the past three years, ECU's research has emphasised the importance of multiple identities and intersectionality in student access and most recently, the Scottish Funding Council has added new requirements on intersectionality to its outcome agreement guidance for 2016/17. These developments should lead to greater consideration of intersectionality by institutions and further sophistication in sector policies, including outcome agreements. However, there is a clear need for more in-depth analysis and greater availability of resources on intersectionality.

This report sets out a working definition of intersectionality and examines some of the specific intersections of identities within the population of Scottish domiciled entrants at Scottish higher education institutions (HEIs). Socioeconomic status (SES) is examined in combination with the four protected characteristics for which there is national data (age, disability, ethnicity and gender). The report uses the postcode-based Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as a primary measure of SES, though other indicators are also discussed. The analysis finds variations in the demographic data of Scottish domiciled entrants in regards to SES and protected characteristics and shows the potential impact combinations of these factors have on access and participation. It is envisioned that this will serve as a starting point for future discussion and analysis both at a sector level and within institutions.

Who is this report for?

This report aims to present sector-level analysis of student intersectionality and access to enable identification of patterns of participation at a sector level, as well as facilitate benchmarking between institutions.

The report should be particularly useful to staff working in:

- = student recruitment
- = widening participation
- = admissions
- = equality and diversity
- = negotiation of outcome agreements
- = student services
- = outcome agreement management at the Scottish Funding Council

About the data

This report uses 2013/14 Higher Education Statistics Agency data for Scottish institutions. Specifically, we examine first year, full-time Scottish-domiciled undergraduates (both first degree and other undergraduates) attending Scottish HEIs in the full person equivalent (FPE) registration population.

We use three main measures of socioeconomic status in our analysis:

- = Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)
- = National Statistics Socioeconomic classification (NS-SEC), measuring occupational status
- = Parental/carer level of education

For definitions of these measures, please see the **Terminology** section.

Our analysis therefore looks at these indicators in relation to each other. For example, does a student from a SIMD Q1 postcode (most deprived areas) also have parents from low occupational status and/or parents with low level qualifications? Notably, the parental education data is in general more complete, having fewer 'not known' responses.

We only examine the relationship between parental occupation and young students as data on parents' occupational background for mature students are not gathered. Students under the age of 21 are asked to indicate their parents' occupational classification at the point of application, while mature applicants are asked to define their own NS-SEC. For this reason, NS-SEC data for young and mature students are not directly comparable, and analysis will focus only on young students for whom NS-SEC provides an indicator of their background.

Accompanying online datasets are available to support institutional benchmarking:
www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/intersectionality-scottish-HEIs

Main findings

A few high level findings from the report stand out at a national level.

- = **A relatively low proportion of male entrants from lower SES backgrounds access Scottish HEIs.**
Male entrants to HEIs are typically from higher SES backgrounds with only 12.9% coming from the 20 per cent most deprived postcodes (SIMD Q1), compared with 14.8% of female entrants.
- = **Age matters. A relatively low proportion of young entrants from lower SES backgrounds access Scottish HEIs.**
Entrants under 21 years old are predominantly from less deprived backgrounds, with only 10.4% coming from SIMD Q1, compared with 23.3% of entrants over the age of 21.
- = **Disabled students entering HEIs on the whole come from lower SES backgrounds compared with non-disabled entrants, however access and participation varies considerably by impairment type.**
Nearly half (48.0%) of disabled entrants are classed as having a specific learning difficulty (eg dyslexia) and these entrants disproportionately come from higher SES backgrounds. 75.4% of entrants with a specific learning difficulty came from the top three SIMD quintiles, with the figure rising to 82.0% among young entrants. In contrast, only 65.7% of all other disabled entrants came from the top three SIMD quintiles.
- = **There is a relatively low proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) students entering Scottish HEIs from higher SES backgrounds.**
BME entrants tend to be from lower SES/SIMD backgrounds. Participation rates among entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes varies by ethnicity, with Asian 16.8%, mixed 16.2%, other 20.2% and black 58.7%. Only 13.2% of white entrants were from SIMD Q1 backgrounds.

-
- = **There is notable variation in access for protected characteristic groups from different SES backgrounds by subject and institution type, though numbers are often too small to draw firm conclusions.**

Among the protected characteristic groups, there is large variation in participation by subject. For instance, law, physical science and education all have low participation of SIMD Q1 male entrants, with education also notable for having very low participation of BME students and disabled entrants, despite having an average proportion of entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes.

- = **Access and participation among different groups will vary by subject and type of institution**

This can be another important factor for institutions to consider alongside sector-wide trends in examining their data.

Intersectionality

Why are we interested in intersectionality?

Individuals can experience complex discrimination, based on a combination of factors and elements of their identity (such as being a man with a disability from a more deprived postcode). It is therefore important that institutions' student recruitment and widening access work is mindful of this complexity when exploring issues and developing solutions. If an intersectional approach is not taken, the discrimination and barriers experienced by some individuals will not be fully understood and tackled.

A working definition

Intersectionality means recognising that people's identities and social positions are shaped by several factors, which create unique experiences and perspectives. These factors include, among others, gender, race, disability, age, sexuality and religion as well as socioeconomic status, geographic location or postcode and the school attended.

For example, someone isn't a woman and black, or a woman and white, but a black woman or white woman. These different elements of identity form and inform each other. In this example the person's identity as a woman cannot be separated from their identity as a black or white individual, and vice versa. The experience of black women, and the barriers they face, will be different to those white women face. The elements of identity cannot be separated because they are not lived or experienced as separate.

In practice, intersectionality is less about bringing two different characteristics/groups together, for example disabled people and people from lower SES backgrounds, and more about considering the experience of disabled people from lower SES backgrounds. These are people at the 'intersection' of socioeconomic disadvantage and disability.

Further information on intersectionality

Intersectionality 101 Olena Hankivsky (2016)

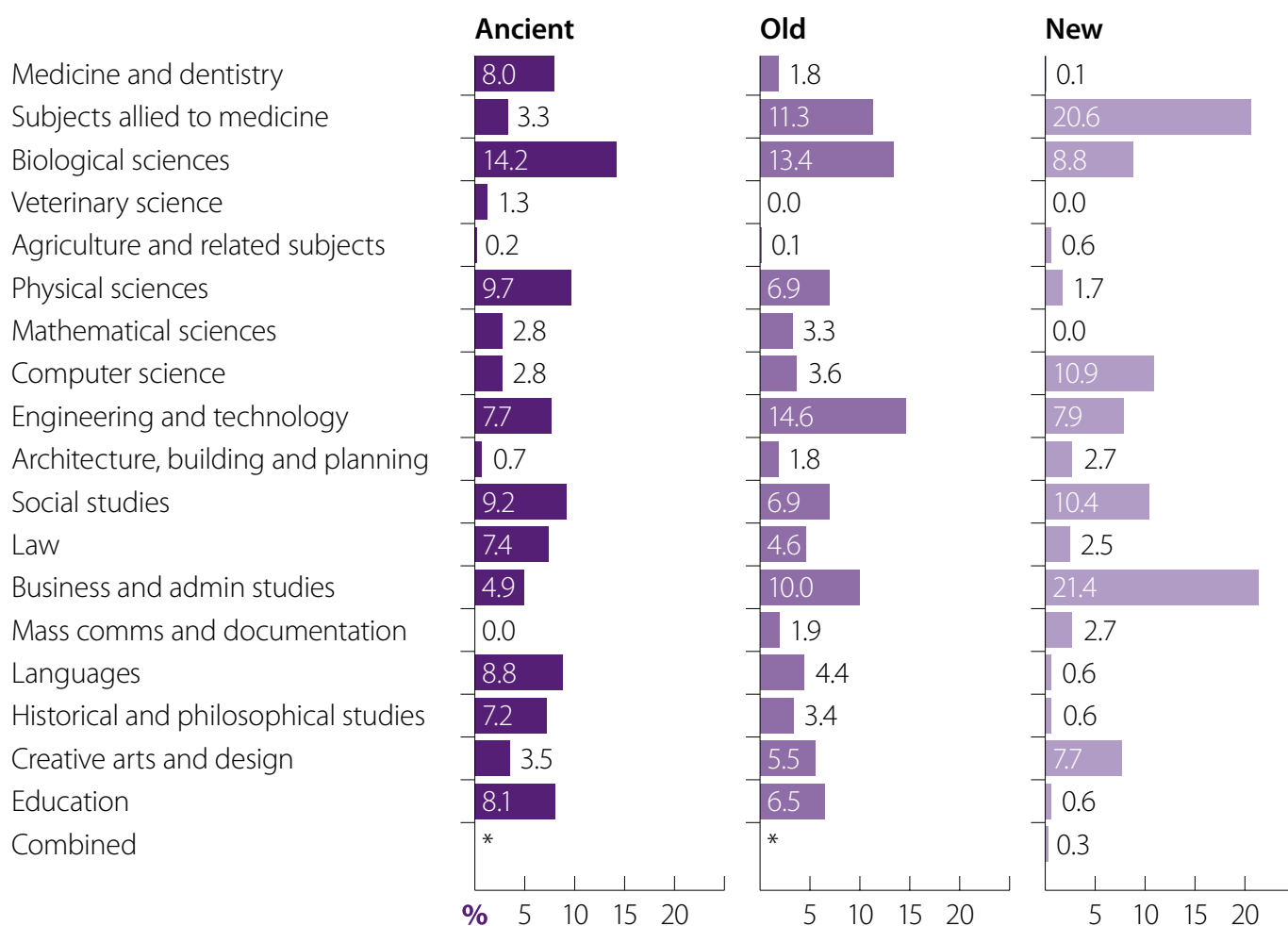
[www.researchgate.net/publication/279293665_](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/279293665_Intersectionality_101)

[Intersectionality_101](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/279293665_Intersectionality_101)

Subject areas and institutions

HEIs vary in the range of subjects they offer and certain subjects are only available at some institutions. There is therefore a level of variation in the participation rate for protected characteristic groups at institutions and among subjects that should be taken into account when examining access and participation among different groups. This section sets out how and why institutions and subjects are categorised within this analysis.

Figure 1: Percentage of entrants in each subject area by type of institution



*Not offered

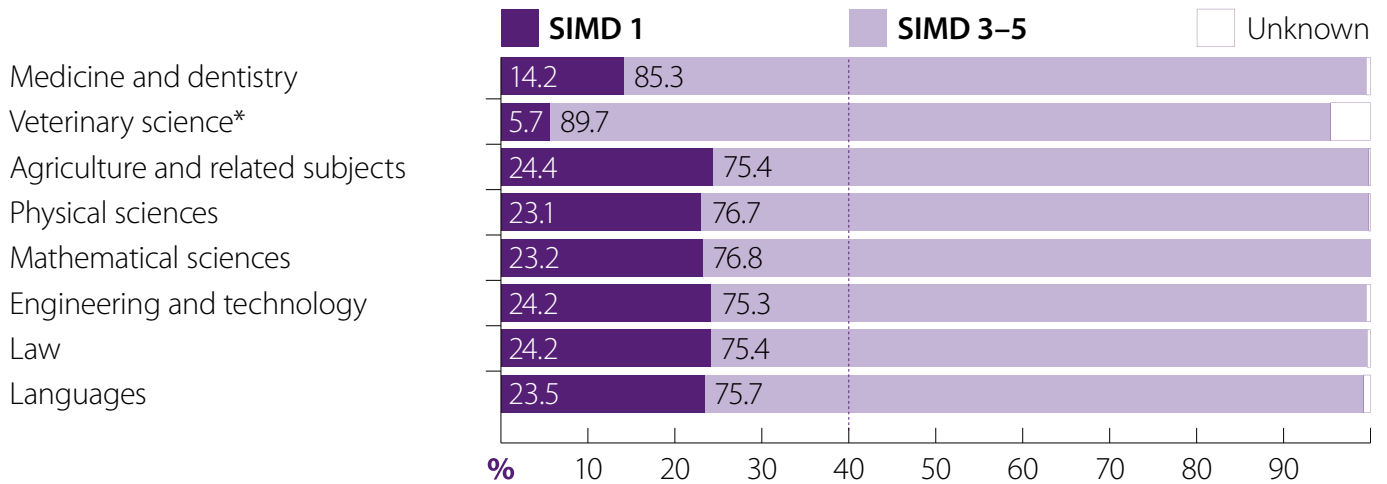
Figure 1 shows the proportion of entrants in each subject area within the type of institution (ancient/old/new) that they were attending. The analysis excludes 'other' institutions as these institutions concentrate on a small number of specific subjects that would be easily identifiable in a sector wide analysis.

To analyse the participation among protected characteristic groups in different subject areas, subjects with the highest and lowest representation of entrants from lower SES backgrounds, as measured by SIMD Q1 and Q2, are grouped. Each of the following sections focus on how socioeconomic status measures intersect with a particular protected characteristic, and include a breakdown by institution type and subjects based on these subject groupings.

Figure 2 shows the eight subjects with the lowest proportion of entrants from more deprived postcodes. These eight subjects all have less than 25% of entrants from SIMD Q1 or SIMD Q2. For entrants from SIMD Q1–2 to be representative in relation to their representation in the Scottish population it would require 40% of entrants to come from this background. Veterinary science has the lowest level of participation among entrants from lower SES backgrounds, followed by medicine and dentistry and physical sciences (please note that veterinary science has relatively low student numbers overall). The other five subject areas all cluster around 76% of entrants from SIMD Q3–5 postcodes.

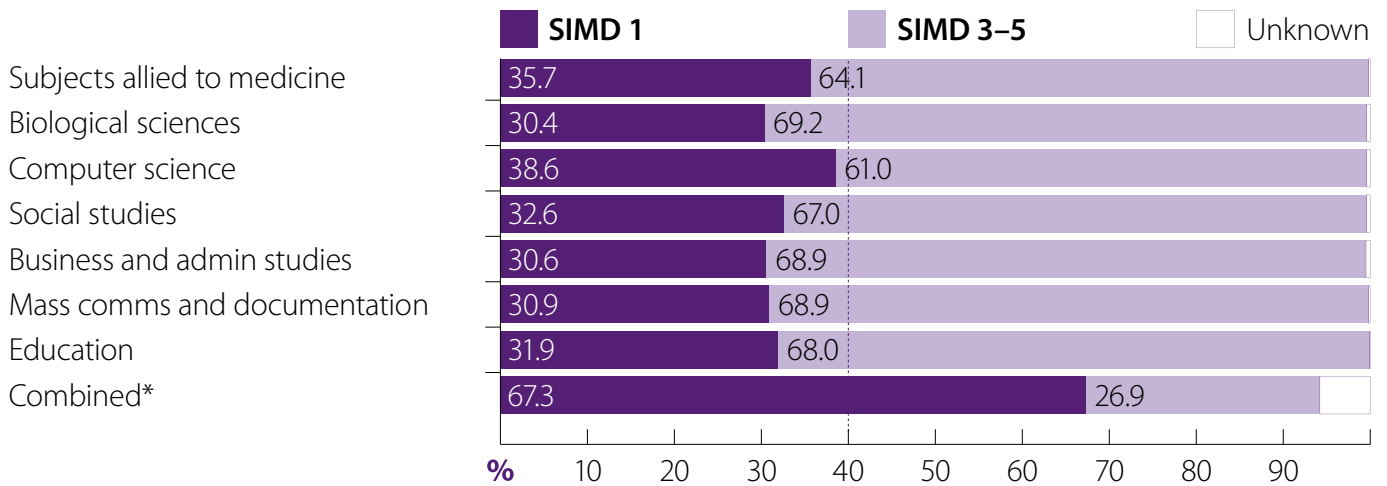
Eight subject areas include 30% or more of entrants from more deprived postcodes (**figure 3**), representing the highest proportion of SIMD Q1 and SIMD Q2 entrants among the subject groupings. The representative 40% criterion is only reached in combined studies and is nearly reached in computer science. Notably, combined studies has very low overall student numbers (52 entrants), a high proportion of whom are mature. Furthermore, the vast majority of combined studies entrants (46) attend new universities where, across all subject areas, a larger proportion of entrants come from more deprived postcodes compared with the sector as a whole.

Figure 2: Subject areas with low proportions of entrants from SIMD Q1–2 postcodes (<25%)



*Numbers are very low in veterinary science (87 entrants)

Figure 3: Subject areas with high proportions of entrants SIMD Q1–2 postcodes (>30%)

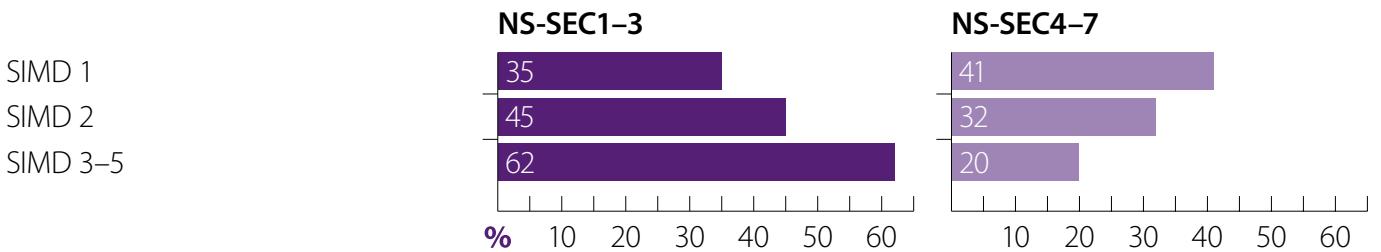


*Numbers are very low in combined studies (52 entrants)

Age

Younger entrants (under 21 years old) from SIMD Q1 postcodes tend to have parents/carers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (as measured by NS-SEC, see **figure 4**). Entrants from all other postcodes are more likely to have a parent/carer of a high socioeconomic background as measured by NS-SEC. NS-SEC data is not applicable to mature entrants (21+) as it measures their current status, rather than background, and therefore is not presented.

Figure 4: The relationship between SIMD quintile and NS-SEC, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).



The parental education data for young entrants and parental occupational classification data shows very similar patterns in relation to SIMD. Proportions of young entrants in different SIMD quintiles with at least one parent/carer with degree level education and proportions of entrants with parents from NS-SEC 1-3 backgrounds are similar.

Figure 5: The relationship between SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

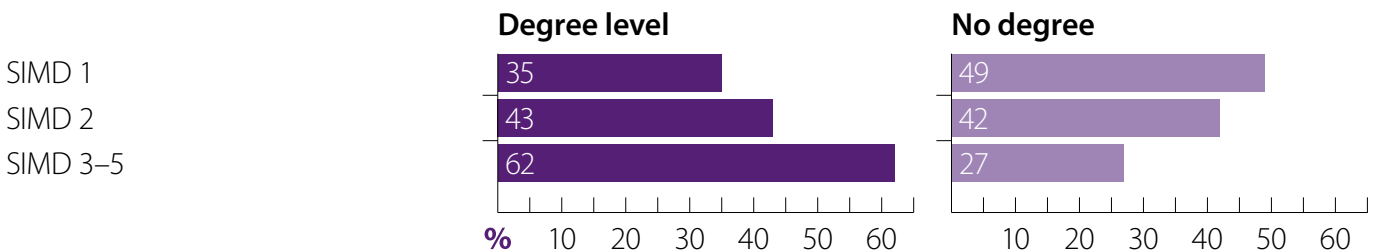
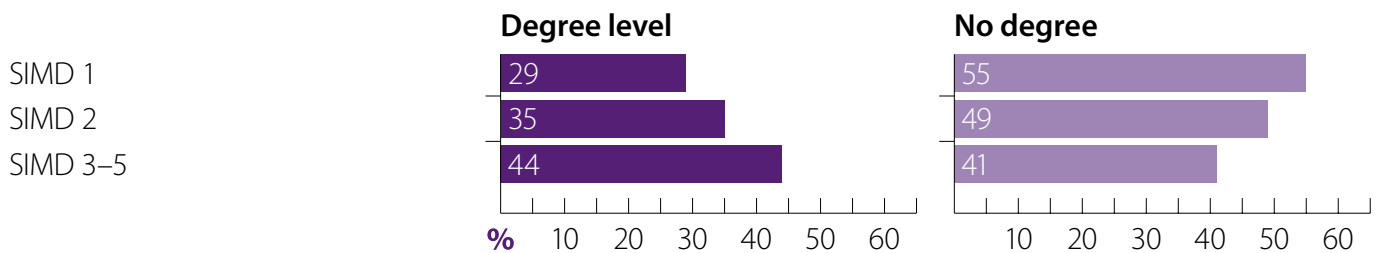


Figure 6 examines the relationship among mature entrants between SIMD and parental level of education. While from all postcodes, fewer mature entrants have a parent/carer educated to degree level compared with young entrants, mature entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes have particularly low levels of parental education. However the most noticeable trend is the drop among mature entrants from less deprived postcodes (SIMD Q3–5), which shifts from 62% of entrants having a parent/carer educated to degree level to 44%, a drop of 18 percentage points.

Figure 6: The relationship between SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled mature full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).



Differences between institutional type

The proportion of entrants from more deprived SIMD postcodes decreases as the age of the institution increases. Similarly, the proportion of mature entrants decreases from new, to old, to ancient universities. There are also lower levels of mature entrants at higher SIMD quintiles (SIMD Q3–5) compared with lower SIMD quintiles (SIMD Q1–2). This means the highest proportion of mature entrants are among SIMD Q1 entrants at new universities, and there are fewer mature entrants from less deprived postcodes at old and ancient universities. For instance, only 11% of entrants at ancient universities from SIMD Q3–5 postcodes are mature, whereas 54% of entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes at new universities are mature.

Subject area differences

A higher proportion of mature entrants come from lower SES backgrounds than young entrants in all subject areas, though there is variation among subjects. Mathematical sciences and education show the largest differences between the proportion of young entrants from SIMD Q1 backgrounds versus the proportion of mature entrants from SIMD Q1 backgrounds.

A notable majority of entrants in these 'low SES participation' subject areas are young, ranging from over 90% in physical and mathematical science to 75% in law and 74% in agriculture and related subjects. 72% of entrants in the sector as a whole are young.

The majority of entrants in 'high SES participation' subject areas are young except in combined studies and in subjects allied to medicine in new universities. In all of these subject areas mature entrants come from more deprived postcodes than young entrants.

Disability

A slightly larger number of young disabled entrants have a parent/carer from a higher occupational background (NS-SEC 1-3) than non-disabled entrants (**figure 7**). This pattern is repeated when examining social background by parental level of qualification (**figure 8**). Mature disabled entrants (**figure 9**) also demonstrate a similar relationship between SIMD background and parental level of education.

Although these figures suggest that disabled entrants come from marginally higher SES backgrounds this relationship does not hold when examining social background in relation to different types of impairment. **Figure 10** indicates that the data are skewed by the relatively higher SES backgrounds of entrants with specific learning difficulties (nearly half – 48% – of the population of disabled entrants). A lower proportion of entrants with an impairment type other than specific learning difficulties come from higher SES backgrounds, compared with non-disabled entrants.

Figure 7: The relationship between disability, SIMD quintile and NS-SEC, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

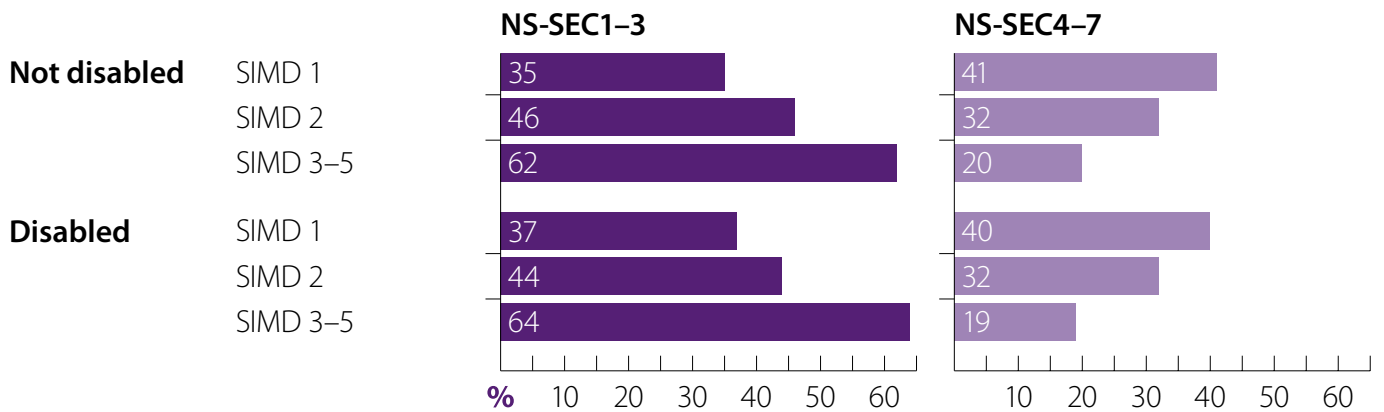


Figure 8: The relationship between disability, SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

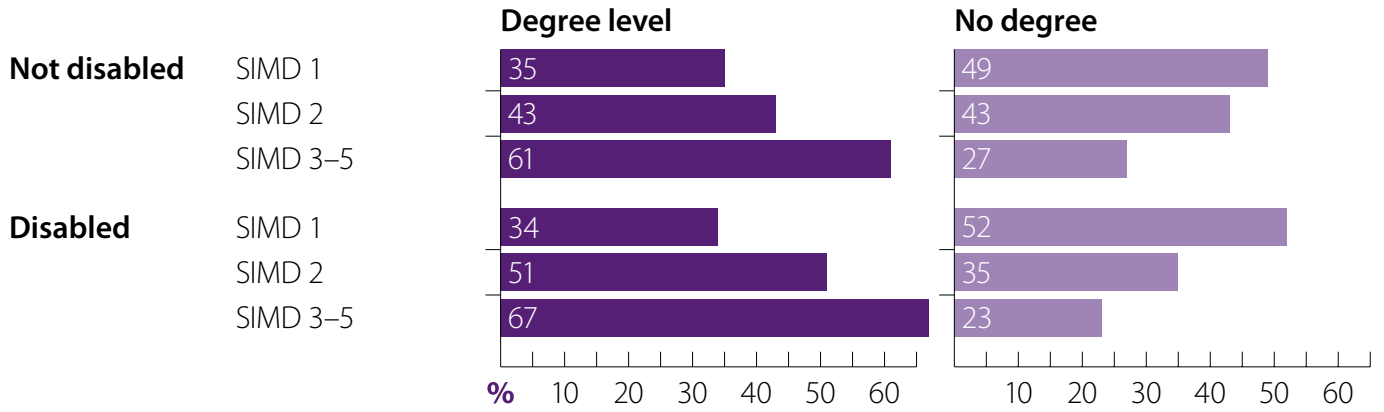


Figure 9: The relationship between disability, SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled mature full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

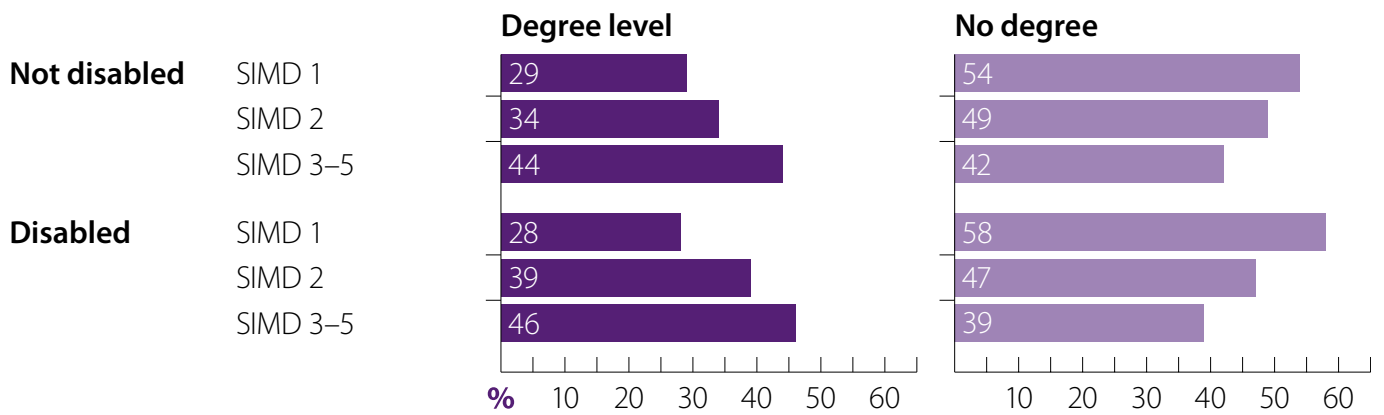
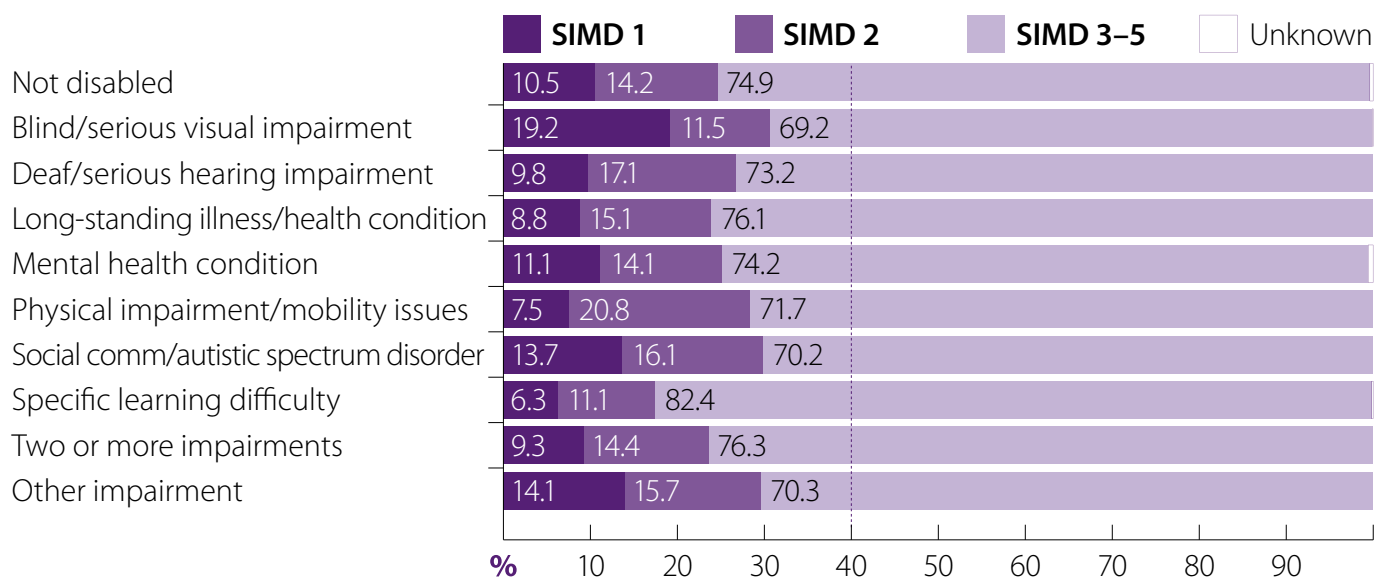


Figure 10: The relationship between SIMD quintile and different impairments, Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).



Note: Numbers are small for certain impairments, particularly those with a visual or hearing impairment.

Differences between institutional type

At ancient institutions there is a higher rate of disability disclosure among entrants from SIMD Q1–2 postcodes, however at new and old institutions, there are higher rates of disability at higher SIMD quintiles.

Specific learning difficulty is the largest category of impairment for each institutional type and SIMD quintile, averaging 48% of all disabled entrants in total. However, among SIMD Q1–2 entrants at ancient institutions and SIMD Q1 entrants at old institutions, they comprise under a third of total disabled entrants.

Subject area differences

Disabled entrants generally come from more deprived postcodes than non-disabled entrants in subjects where the proportion of SIMD Q1–2 entrants are low, except in veterinary science and engineering and technology. The opposite is generally the case for subject areas where the overall proportion of SIMD Q2 entrants is higher. The main exceptions are in biological sciences in ancient universities and computer science in ancient and new universities.

There is a large amount of variation in disability disclosure rates among the eight subjects with low SES participation. In medicine, veterinary science, mathematics and engineering and technology, the proportion of disabled entrants is below 8%. In languages and physics it is around 10% and agriculture and related subjects it is nearly 14%. The disability participation rate for all entrants is just over 10%.

With the exception of veterinary science and engineering and technology, in all low SES participation subject areas disabled entrants come from more deprived postcodes (SIMD Q1–2).

The proportions of disabled entrants in high SES participation subject areas vary, though it is generally between 9 to 11%. The exceptions that fall below this are: subjects allied to medicine in ancient universities, which has less than 6% disabled entrants; computer science in old universities (7.2%); business and administrative studies in ancient universities (6.6%) and old universities (7.0%); mass communication and documentation with 6.2% in old universities; and education in ancient and old universities (7.3% and 8.3% respectively).

Subjects that have a higher proportion are: computer science in ancient (12.5%) and new (15.8%) universities, mass communication in new universities (13.2%) and education in new universities (13.8%).

In most subject areas in each institutional type, disabled entrants come from higher SES backgrounds than non-disabled entrants. Exceptions to this rule, where the proportion of disabled entrants from more deprived postcodes (SIMD Q1–2) is higher than non-disabled entrants, is in biological sciences in ancient universities (30.2% vs 23.0%) and computer science in ancient (29.2% vs 26.2%) and new universities (42.5% vs 40.7%). The difference is particularly noticeable in mass communication and documentation in old universities (44.4% vs 35.0%) and in education in new universities (58.4% vs 44.0%); however, overall student numbers are low in education in new universities.

Ethnicity

The following analysis considers the relationship between SIMD, occupational level of parent/carer and parental level of education in relation to ethnicity.

All BME groups have a higher proportion of HEI entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes than white entrants, though this is particularly notable among black entrants. In contrast to white entrants, BME entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes do not as consistently have parents/carers without degree level qualifications and from lower occupational classifications.

Figure 11 shows that the relationship between occupational classification (as measured by NS-SEC) and SIMD postcode differs between white and BME entrants, with BME entrants from different NS-SEC classes much more evenly distributed across SIMD quintiles and postcodes. SIMD data is therefore a much weaker indicator of parental occupation for young BME entrants. This is also the case when examining SIMD in relation to parental level of education and ethnicity (**figures 12 and 13**).

Figure 11: The relationship between ethnicity, SIMD quintile and NS-SEC, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

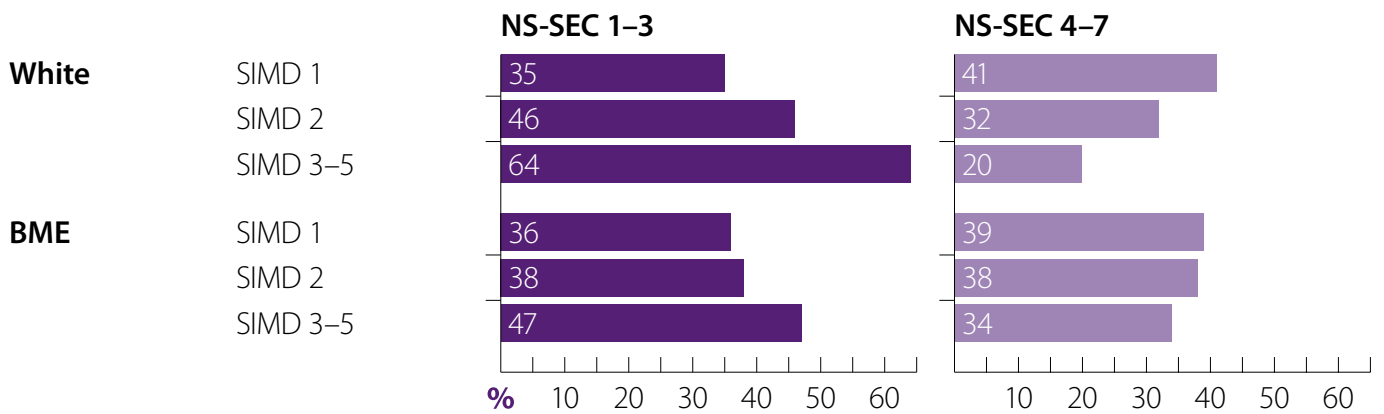


Figure 12: The relationship between ethnicity, SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

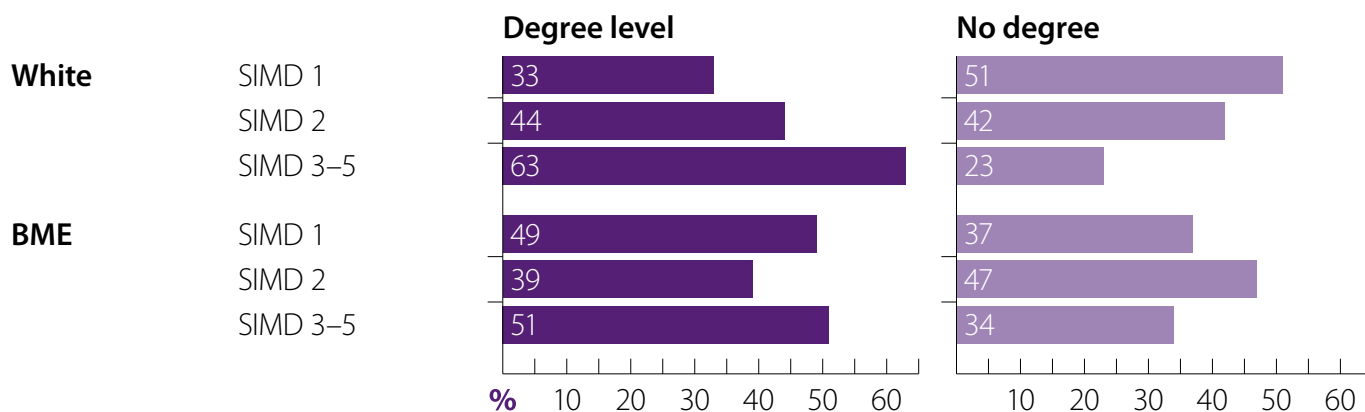
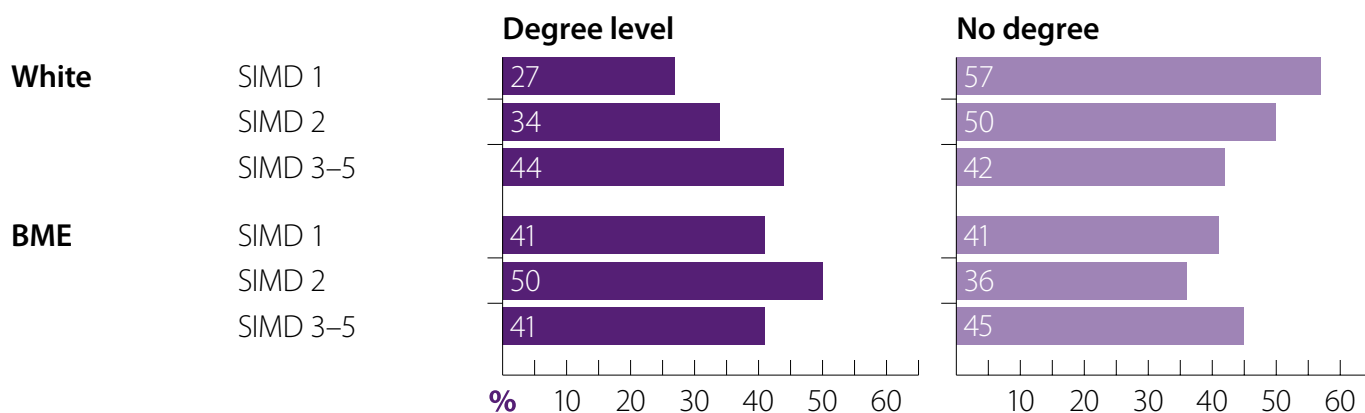
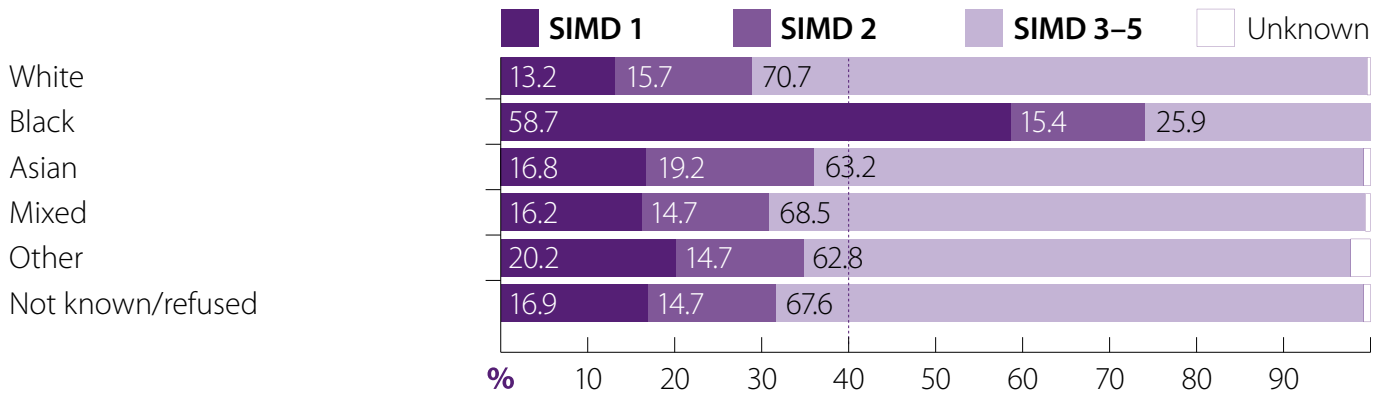


Figure 13: The relationship between ethnicity, SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled mature full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).



As with disability, the aggregated BME data is a good starting point, but analysis should examine patterns among different ethnic groups. As can clearly be seen in **figure 14**, broad patterns in BME entrants can mask variations among different ethnic groups. While white entrants have the lowest proportion of entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes, the proportion of black entrants from SIMD Q1 postcodes are roughly three times greater than all other ethnicities and are the only group that is predominantly from SIMD Q1 postcodes. Entrants from Asian, other and mixed ethnicities tend to have more even distributions across SIMD groupings.

Figure 14: The relationship among entrants between ethnicity and SIMD quintile by different ethnic group.



Differences between institutional type

BME entrants account for 7.1% of the Scottish domiciled entrant population, a higher proportion (41.0%) of whom come from lower SES backgrounds compared with white entrants (28.9%). However, there is considerable variation among institutions and between subjects studied.

The proportion of entrants from BME backgrounds is generally higher in ancient and, to a lesser extent, in old universities than in new universities. Relative to the proportion of white entrants, there are also higher proportions of BME entrants in SIMD Q1 than in SIMD Q2 or SIMD Q3–5 in ancient and old universities than in new universities.

There is variation among different ethnic groups however. For instance, the highest proportion of black entrants is found among SIMD Q1 entrants at new universities, while entrants with ‘other’ ethnicities are largely concentrated at old universities. The highest proportions of Asian entrants are found at ancient universities from SIMD Q1–2 postcodes. This group of students is less well represented at new universities.

BME entrants are generally more likely to study in ancient or old universities than in new universities and come from lower SES backgrounds than white entrants irrespective of the overall proportion of SIMD Q1-2 entrants in subject areas and type of institution. The main exception is BME entrants studying mathematical science at all institutional types, and those

studying computer science in old institutions, who are more likely to come from less deprived postcodes than white entrants. This is also the case for education in ancient and old universities; however, the numbers of BME entrants in this category are small.

Subject area differences

Examining low SES participation subjects, in ancient institutions the proportion of BME entrants studying medicine is 14.4%, more than one in five (21.6%) of whom come from SIMD Q1 and Q2 compared with 11.7% of white entrants.

There are no entrants from BME backgrounds in veterinary science, virtually none in agriculture and related subjects and a very low proportion in languages and education.

In physics between 5% and 7% of entrants are of BME origin in all three types of institutions. These proportions are slightly higher in mathematical sciences. Notably, in this subject, BME entrants are more likely than white entrants to come from a more affluent postcode, whereas in physics this is only the case in old universities.

Engineering and technology has a relatively high proportion of entrants who are BME, and they are more likely to come from more deprived postcodes, than in other subjects.

Considering high SES participation subjects, there are a relatively high proportion of BME entrants within subjects allied to medicine, computer science and business and administration and lower numbers in biological sciences, social studies and education.

A much higher proportion of BME entrants generally come from more deprived postcodes in almost all subject areas, compared with white students. The primary exception is computer science where a higher proportion of BME entrants are from more affluent areas than white entrants. This is also the case for students studying mass communication in old universities and education in ancient and old universities, though the overall number of BME entrants is low for both subjects.

Gender

Men from lower SES backgrounds, irrespective of which measure of socioeconomic status is used, are likely to be underrepresented in higher education. **Figures 15, 16 and 17** show that a slightly greater proportion of young male entrants from a SIMD Q1 background have a parent/carer of higher occupational background and with degree level qualification than female entrants from these backgrounds. Equally, a greater proportion of mature female entrants have a parent/carer with no degree compared with mature male entrants. Though there is a consistent picture across different socioeconomic indicators at the sector level, there is variation at institutional and subject level.

Figure 15: The relationship between gender, SIMD quintile and NS-SEC, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

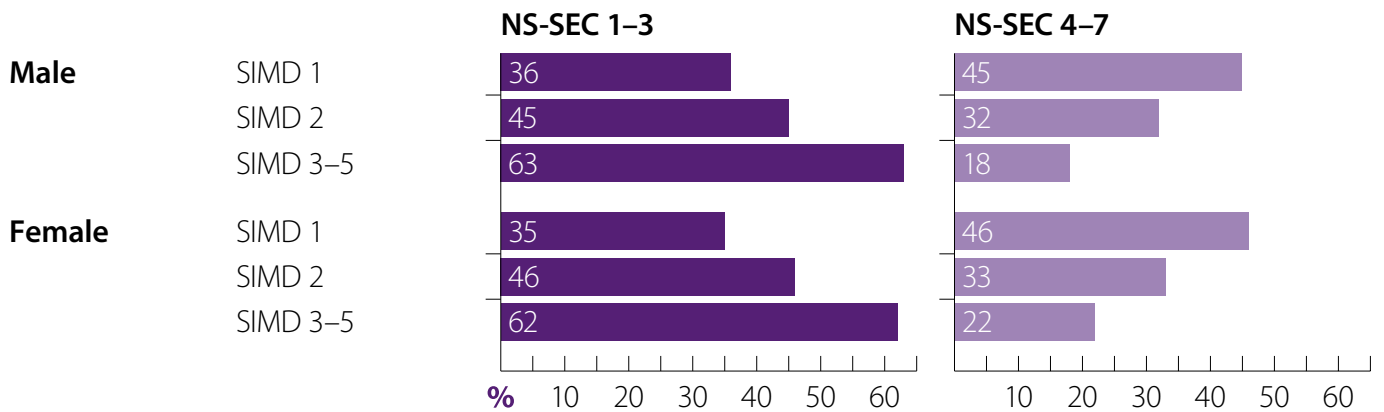


Figure 16: The relationship between gender, SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled young full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).

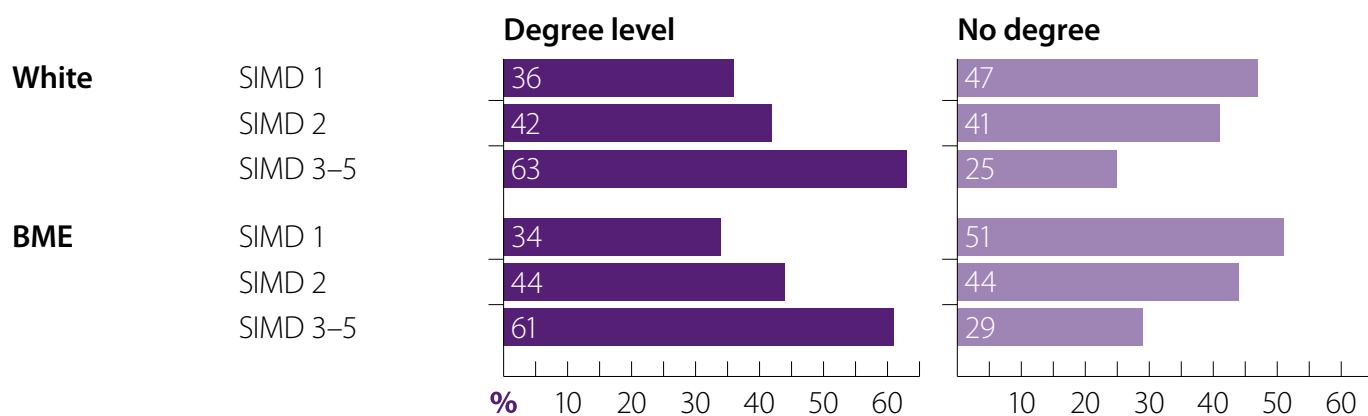
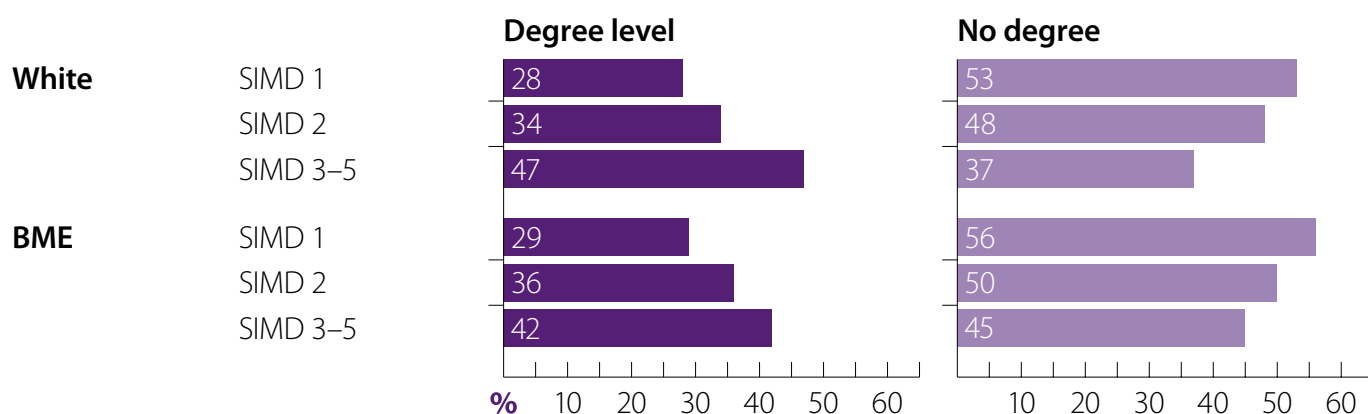


Figure 17: The relationship between gender, SIMD quintile and parental level of education, first year Scottish domiciled mature full-time undergraduate entrants (percentages).



Differences between institutional type

Women comprise the majority of entrants at each SIMD level and in each group of HEIs. In general there are fewer male entrants from more deprived postcodes, but this pattern is more noticeable at old universities than at new or ancient institutions.

There is a relatively large proportion (48.1%) of male entrants from SIMD Q3-5 postcodes at old universities.

Subject area differences

In subject areas where the proportion of entrants from more deprived (SIMD Q1–2) postcodes are low, there are higher proportions of men from these postcodes than women. In subject areas where the proportion of entrants from SIMD Q1–2 backgrounds are higher, the relationship between gender and background is more complex as it varies by type of institution and subject area.

There are high numbers of women in medicine, agriculture, law and languages and especially in veterinary sciences. In these subjects a greater proportion of women come from less deprived postcodes than men, except in languages and law.

Women are underrepresented in physics (except in new universities), mathematics and particularly in engineering and technology and in these subjects come from slightly less deprived postcodes than men.

Considering high SES participation subjects, in old and new universities there are greater numbers of women from SIMD Q1–2 postcodes in subjects allied to medicine. This is also the case in computer science where the number of female entrants overall are low.

Terminology

Black and minority ethnic (BME)

This definition is widely recognised and used to identify patterns of marginalisation and segregation caused by attitudes towards an individual's ethnicity.

ECU recognises the limitations of this definition, particularly the assumption that minority ethnic students are a homogenous group.

Higher education institution types: ancient, old, new, other

HEIs in Scotland are categorised as ancient, old, new and other.

Ancient: the four ancient universities are: University of Aberdeen, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow and University of St Andrews. These universities offer the broadest range of subjects, vary in size of student population and date from the 16th century or before.

Old: the four old HEIs are University of Dundee, Heriot-Watt University, University of Stirling and University of Strathclyde. These universities date from the 1960s.

New: there are seven new HEIs: Abertay University, Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of the Highlands and Islands, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University and University of the West of Scotland. These universities date from 1992 or later.

Other: The three other, or specialist, HEIs are: Glasgow School of Art, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Scotland's Rural College. These three institutions focus on specific subject areas.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

HESA gathers data annually from higher education providers, analyses and publishes these data which are used by governments and other organisations.

Mature student

HESA categorises undergraduate students as mature when they are 21 or over when entering the first year of an undergraduate course.

**National Statistics
Socioeconomic classification
(NS-SEC)**

NS-SEC is used to classify an individual according to occupational background. There are eight categories ranging from 'higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations' (NS-SEC 1) to 'never worked and long-term unemployed' (NS-SEC 8). These categories are used as a proxy for a person's socioeconomic background.

HESA uses the occupation of a student's parent/carer as one of the performance indicators to measure universities' widening access performance. It comes from a student's application form and is based on students reporting the occupation of the highest earner in the household and is therefore open to error.

Students aged 21 and over are asked to report on their own occupational background. As a measure of socioeconomic background it is therefore only valid for young students.

Parental level of education

Parental level of education is split into two categories:

- = at least one parent/carer/guardian has a degree or higher level qualification
- = neither parent/carer/guardian has a degree or higher level qualification.

It relies on self-reporting and is therefore open to error.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are:

- = age
- = disability
- = gender reassignment
- = marriage and civil partnership
- = pregnancy and maternity
- = race
- = religion or belief
- = sex
- = sexual orientation

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis on any of these characteristics.

Marriage and civil partnership is only protected in relation to employment.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

This index is an area-based measure which identifies the concentration of deprivation in small areas (known as datazones) across the whole of Scotland.

These datazones are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 6505 (least deprived).

For the purpose of analysis, these datazones are grouped into five larger units called quintiles. This groups them from the 20% most deprived (SIMD Q1) to the 20% least deprived (SIMD Q5).

Find out more: www.scotland.gsi.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD

Socioeconomic indicators

These indicators aim to measure the socioeconomic status of a person.

HESA and the Scottish Funding Council use NS-SEC and SIMD in Scotland. In addition data on parental level of education is gathered by HESA and can be used as a socioeconomic indicator.

Disabled students

Disabled students are those that have disclosed as having a disability on entry to university. Figures for 'non-disabled' students include those with unknown disability status.

Specific learning difficulties

The term specific learning difficulties includes learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.

Underrepresented groups

This term is used to refer to groups that have not traditionally entered university. It is often used to refer to those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Widening access/widening participation

These two terms normally refer to increasing access from underrepresented groups.

Young student

HESA categorises undergraduate students as young when they are below 21 when entering first year of an undergraduate course.

Equality Challenge Unit

Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) supports higher education institutions across the UK and in colleges in Scotland to advance equality and diversity for staff and students.

ECU provides research, information and guidance, training, events and Equality Charters that drive forward change and transform organisational culture in teaching, learning, research and knowledge exchange. We have over ten years' experience of supporting institutions to remove barriers to progression and success for all staff and students.

ECU believes that the benefits of equality and diversity and inclusive practice are key to the wellbeing and success of individuals, the institution's community, the efficiency and excellence of institutions, and the growth of further and higher education in a global environment.

We are a registered charity funded by the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Universities UK, and through direct subscription from higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland.



Equality Challenge Unit

7th floor, Queen's House
55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London, WC2A 3LJ
T 020 7438 1010
F 020 7438 1011
E info@ecu.ac.uk
www.ecu.ac.uk

© **Equality Challenge Unit 2016** Information in this publication may be reproduced solely by ECU subscribers and the universities and colleges that ECU is funded to support, as long as it retains accuracy, the source is identified and it will not be used for profit. Use of this publication for any other purpose is prohibited without prior permission from ECU. Alternative formats are available: E pubs@ecu.ac.uk

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales, No. 05689975. Charity no. 1114417 (England, Wales) and SC043601 (Scotland).