

Commissioner for Fair Access

Statement on HESA entrant statistics, released 17th January 2019

The latest HESA figures¹ on the proportion of people from deprived areas entering Scotland's universities suggest that the Government's first interim target on fair access has almost been met - four years in advance.

They show that 15.6 per cent of full-time first degree entrants in 2017/18 came from the 20 per cent most deprived areas, just short of the 16 per cent target for 2021. By 2030 the aim is to have a truly level playing field - 20 per cent of entrants from the 20 per cent most deprived areas. That target too now looks achievable.

What makes the latest figures particularly encouraging is that they follow three years when there was little improvement in the proportion of full-time first degree entrants from the most deprived areas. The Government, the Funding Council and, above all, the Institutions - including the ancient universities - have worked hard to turn that round.

But challenges remain. Getting from 16 to 20 per cent will require continuing effort. The gap in school attainment is a particular concern. Entrants from more deprived areas are still over-concentrated in particular institutions - colleges and 'post-1992' universities. Not all disadvantaged people live in the most deprived areas, especially in more sparsely populated rural areas. Other forms of discrimination also have to be addressed. In particular, opportunities for older and part-time students need to be improved.



Professor Sir Peter Scott
Commissioner for Fair Access

¹ The full set of information on 2017/18 enrolments published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency is available online as an [interactive publication](#).