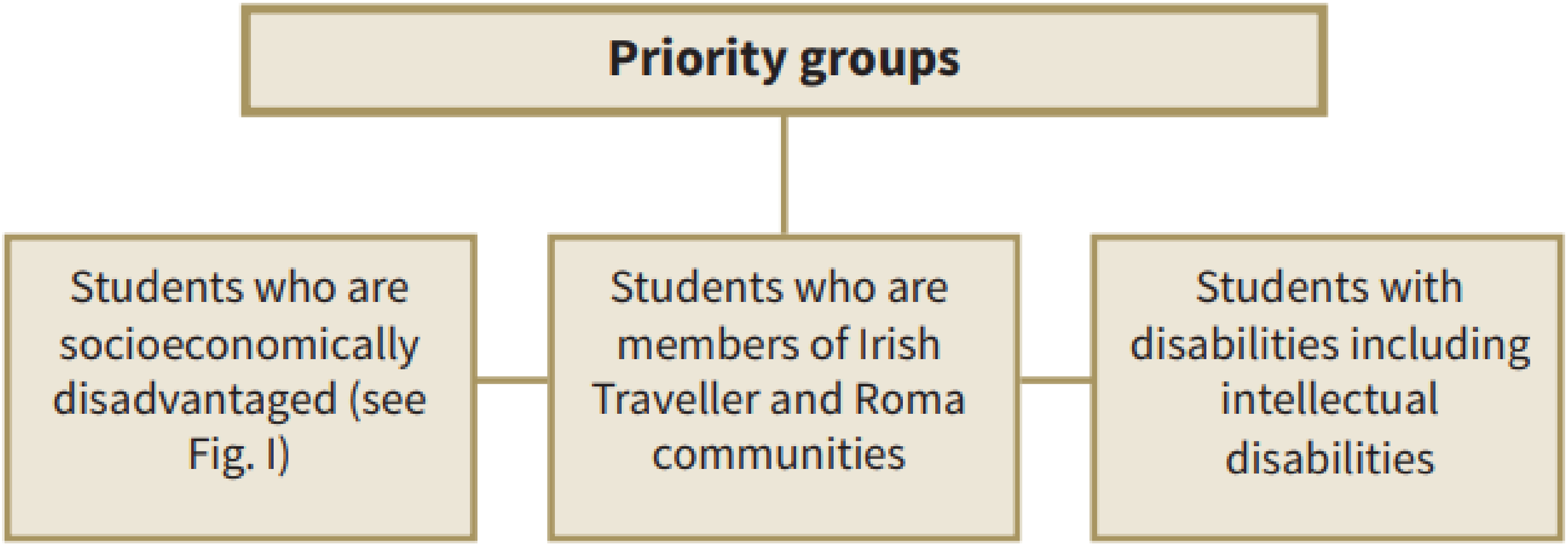
Access & widening participation student numbers & trends 2018/19 – 2024/25

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

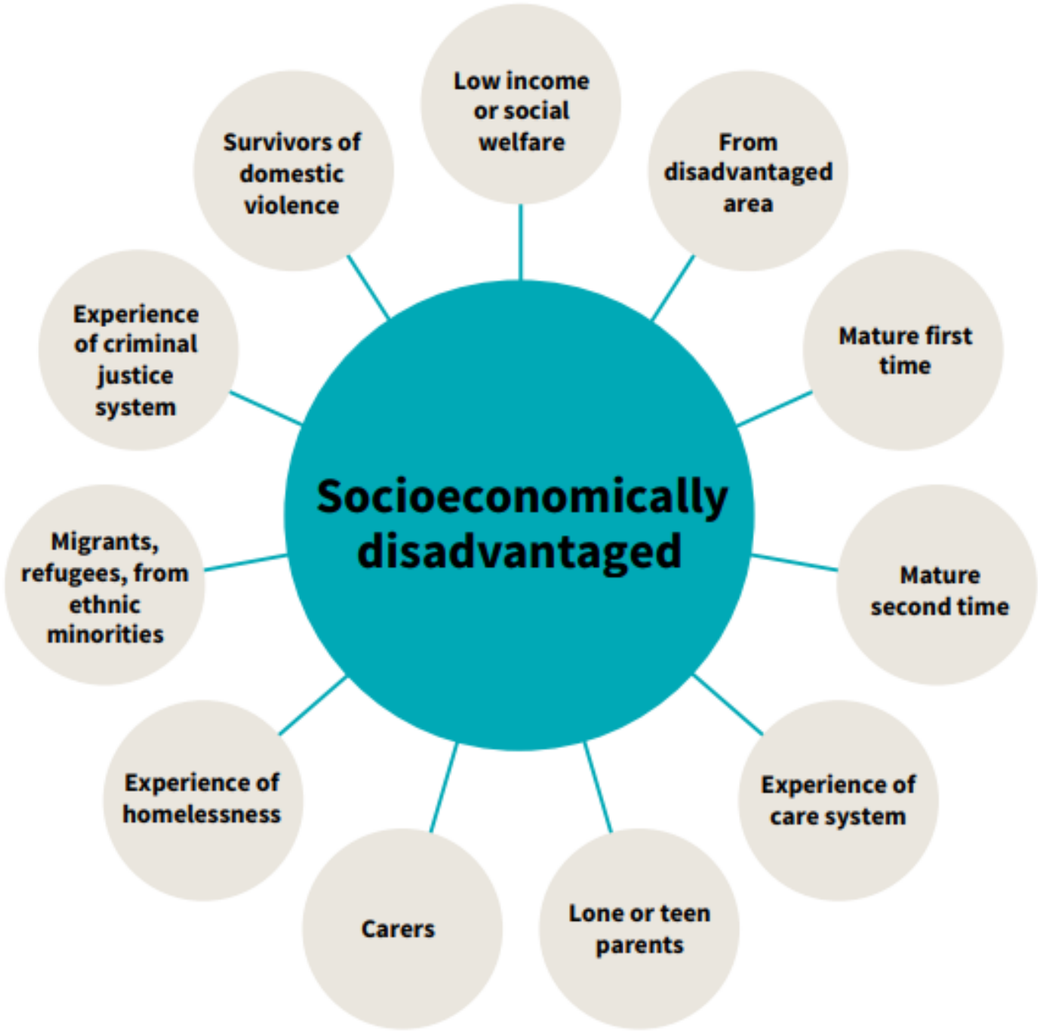
Access & Participation @ UL

The University of Limerick (UL) is dedicated to expanding educational opportunities and is actively pursuing the objectives outlined in its UL @ 50 Strategic Plan and the National Access Plan 2022 - 2028. UL is committed to increasing the participation and success of students and communities that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Through a variety of Access Entry routes, UL collaborates with educational providers, organisations, and communities to support these students in gaining entry to the university. Once enrolled, UL students benefit from a range of supports designed to ease their transition to university life and to develop the skills needed to thrive both academically and beyond their time at university.

As part of the System Performance Framework 2023–2028: Performance Agreement between UL and the Higher Education Authority, UL has set a range of targets to increase enrolment, progression and completion rates for students from under-represented communities. The following slides focus on our Access Pathway data, which includes priority groups from the NAP.



NAP 2022/28 Priority Groups



NAP Socioeconomically disadvantaged sub-groups

Our Access Pathways

DARE: Disability Access Route to Education is a third level admissions scheme for students from non-traditional learning backgrounds, including students with a disability.

HEAR: The Higher Education Access Route is a third level admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Matures Students: A mature student is someone who is 23 years of age or older by 1st January in the calendar year of proposed entry to an undergraduate course.

FET/QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) / Further Education and Training (FET) entry routes are designed for students coming through level 5 or level 6 courses from Colleges of Further Education and are seeking a level 8 course.

Executive Summary

In 2024/25, almost one in five new UL students (19.2%) entered through an access pathway. 8% oDARE participation reached a record high of 295 students. Access routes through HEAR, Mature Student entry and FET/QQI continued to provide important pathways for underrepresented learners into higher education.

Access & Participation @ UL

2024/25 Key Highlights - Access & Widening Participation at UL

- **616 new entrants** entered UL via Access Pathways, representing **19.2% of all new entrant enrolments,** which is one in five new UL students.
- **DARE entrants reached 295 students (9.2%)**, the highest level recorded over the period shown, continuing a strong upward trend from 156 students in 2018/19.
- **1,144 students were in receipt of the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD)**, an increase of 105 students from 2023/24 and the highest figure recorded.
- **HEAR entrants totalled 167 students (5.2%)**. While slightly lower than 2023/24, HEAR remains one of the most significant access routes into UL.
- **71 mature students** entered UL in 2024/25, accounting for **2.2% of new entrants**.
- **83 students entered through the FET/QQI route (2.6%)**, remaining significantly above pre-2022 levels despite a small decrease from 2023/24.

New Entrant Access Route 2018/19 – 2024/25

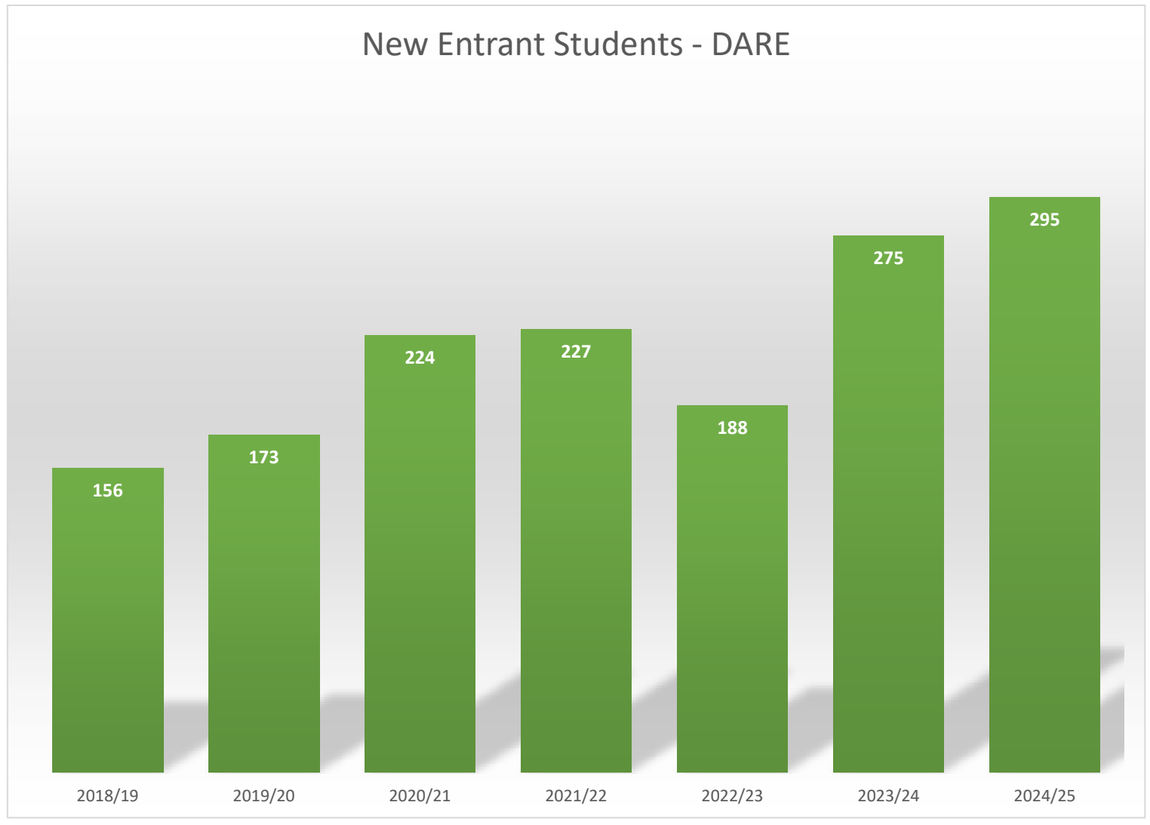
7 Year Access Entry Route Pathway Overview - UL

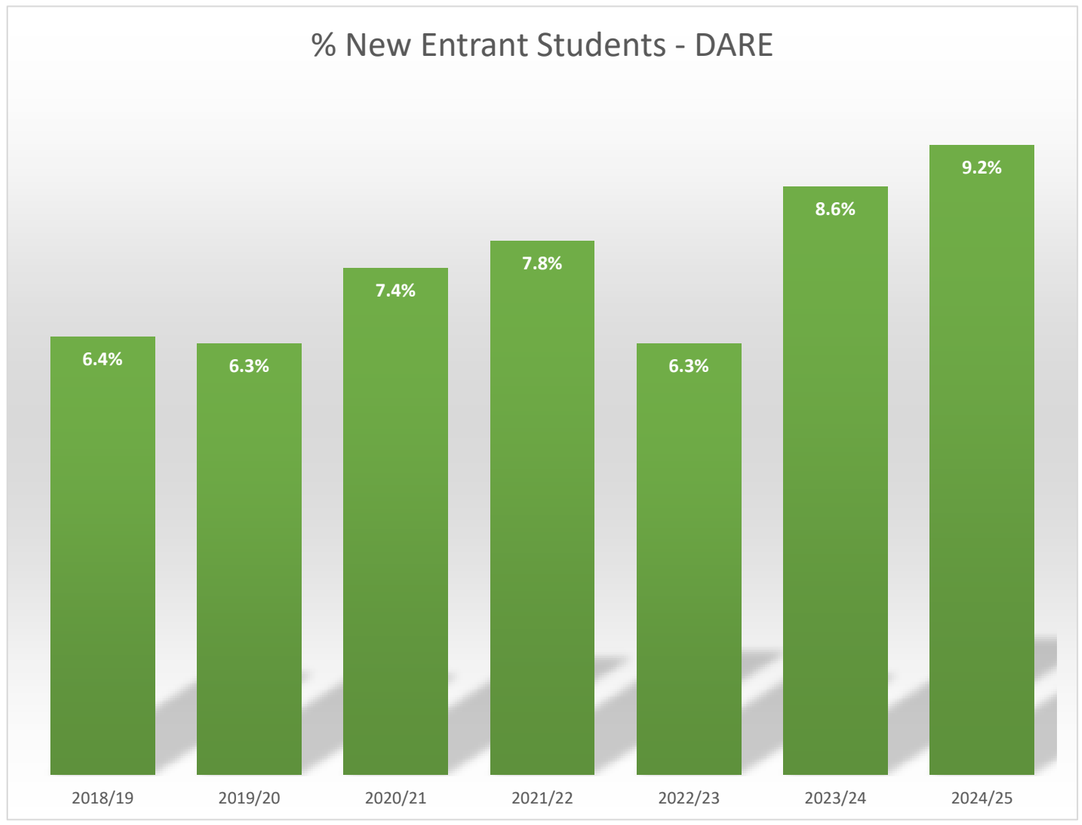
Year	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
No. New Entrant Students	2445		2747		3028		2912		2980		3,195		3210	
DARE	156	6.4%	173	6.3%	224	7.4%	227	7.8%	188	6.3%	275	8.60%	295	9.2%
HEAR	191	7.8%	209	7.6%	200	6.6%	163	5.6%	164	5.5%	179	5.60%	167	5.2%
Mature Students	112	4.6%	129	4.7%	103	3.4%	108	3.7%	66	2.2%	86	2.70%	71	2.2%
FET/QQI	59	2.4%	44	1.6%	61	2.0%	52	1.8%	66	2.2%	93	2.90%	83	2.6%
Access/Foundation Courses	17	0.7%	14	0.5%	12	0.4%	9	0.3%	NA	NA	3	0.10%	0	0.0%
Total Access Pathway UL	**518**	**21.9%**	**569**	**20.7%**	**588**	**19.8%**	**550**	**19.2%**	**484**	**16.2%**	**633**	**19.90%**	**616**	**19.2%**

*Data Source – HEA

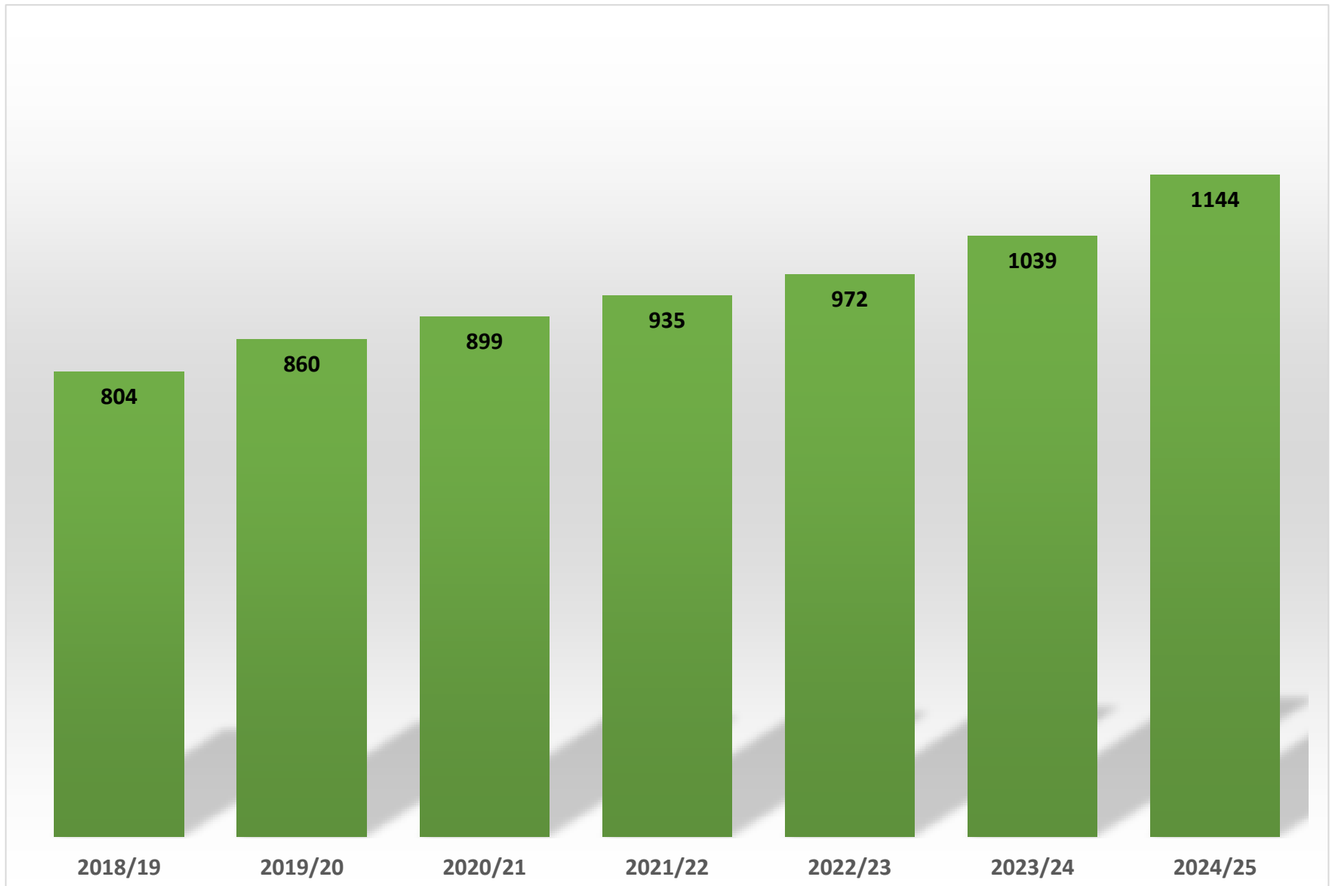
[Key Facts and Figures | Statistics | Higher Education Authority]

New Entrant DARE Access Route 2018/19 – 2024/25

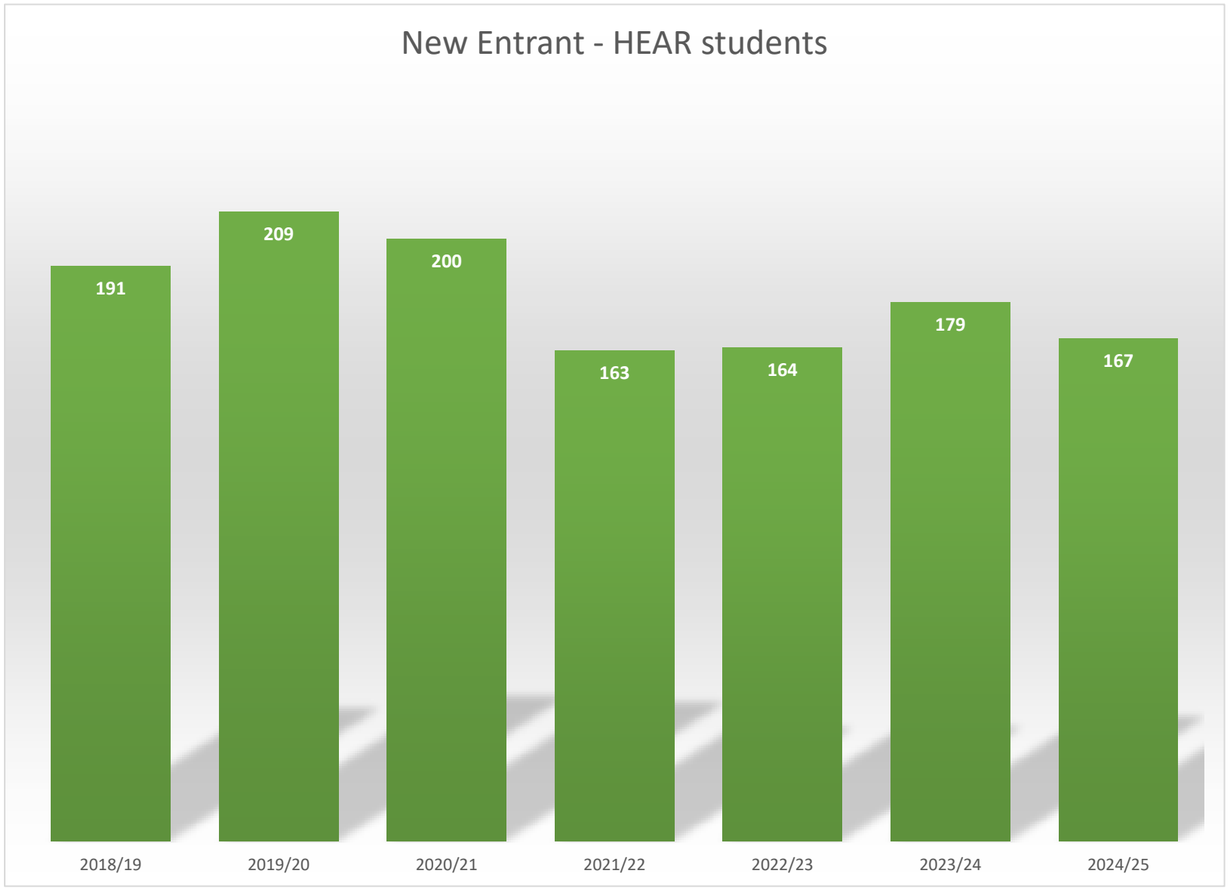


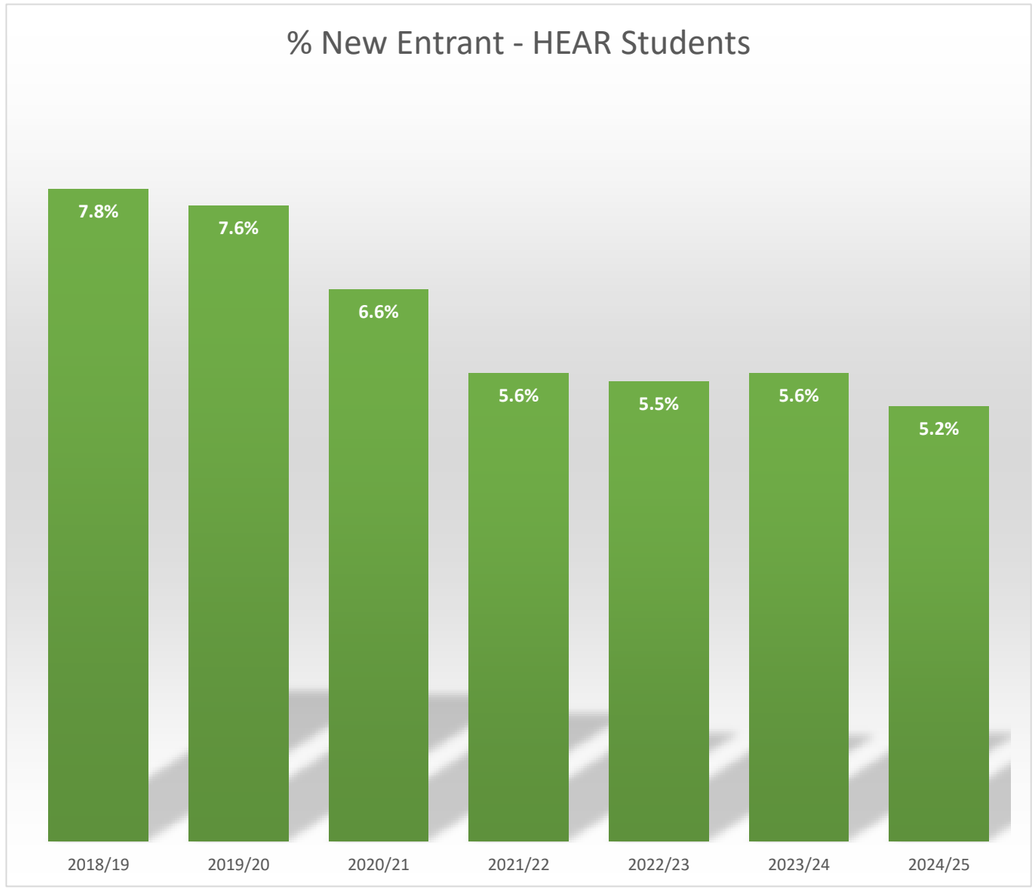


Students in receipt of FSD, 2018/19 – 2024/25

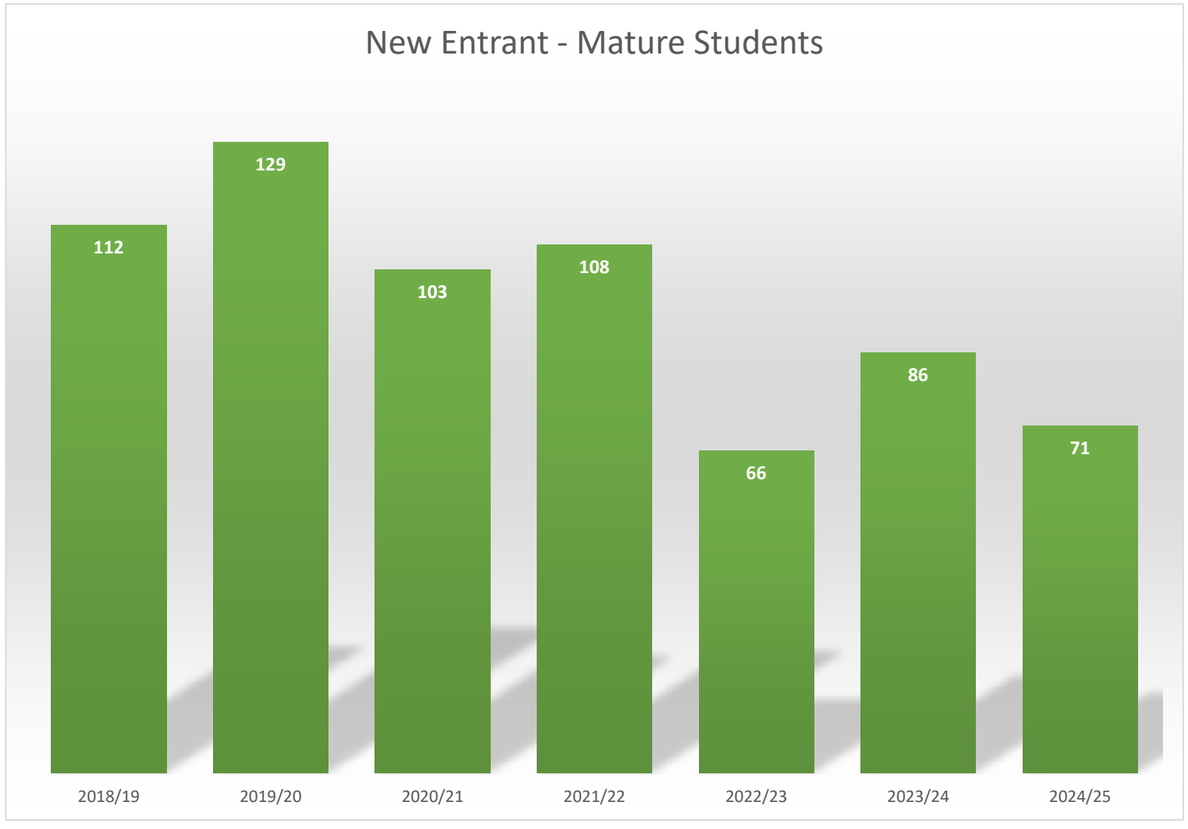


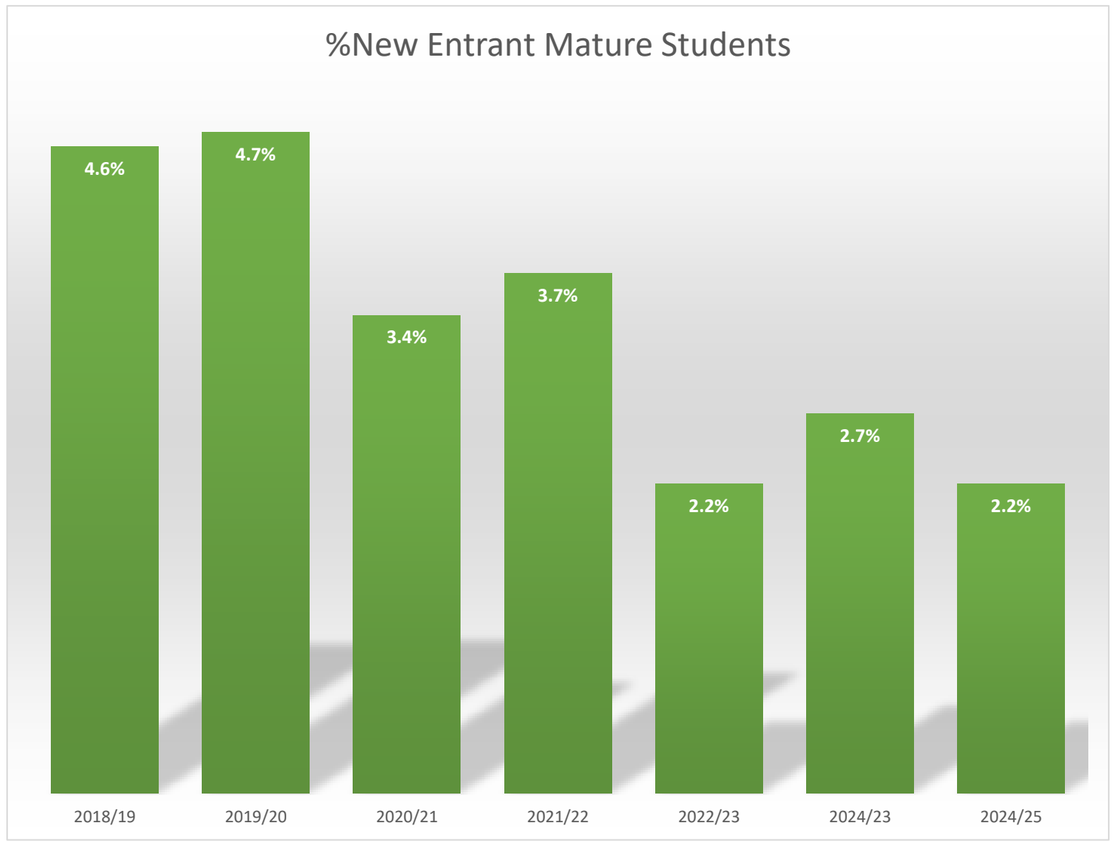
New Entrants HEAR Access Route 2018/19 – 2024/25



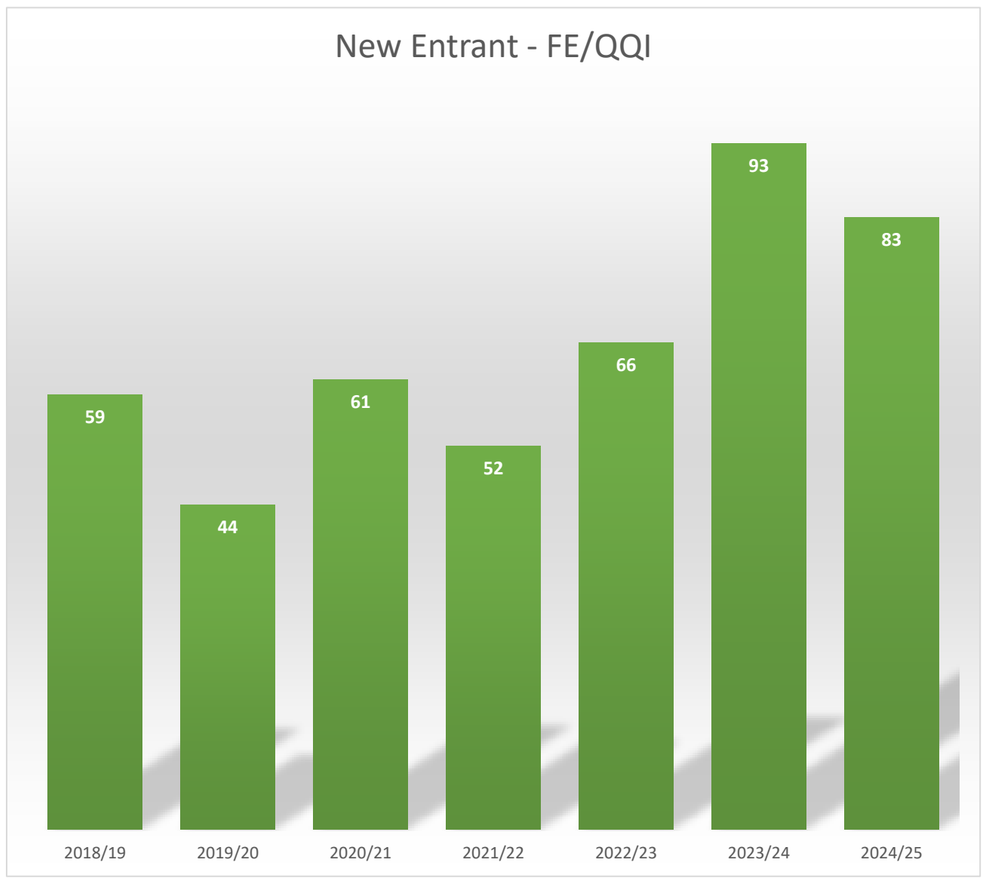


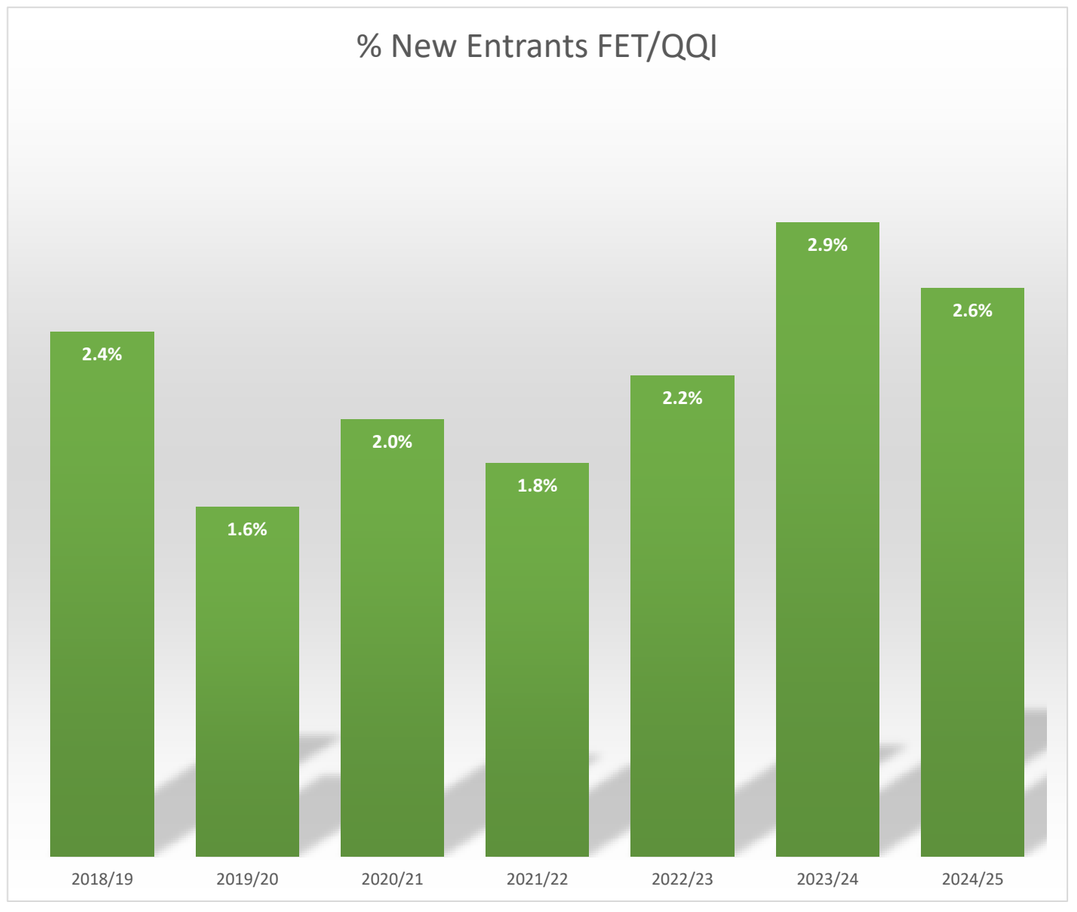
New Entrants Mature Students Access Route 2018/19 – 2024/25





New Entrants FET/QQI Access Route 2018/19 – 2024/25





Deprivation Index Score 2023/24

2023-24 DIS all Students	
	UL
Affluent	13%
Marginally Above Average	51%
Marginally Below Average	29%
Disadvantaged	8%

2023-24 DIS Undergraduate	
	UL
Affluent	11%
Marginally Above Average	51%
Marginally Below Average	30%
Disadvantaged	8%

2023-24 DIS Postgraduate Students	
	UL
Affluent	18%
Marginally Above Average	49%
Marginally Below Average	26%
Disadvantaged	6%

Data Sources

HEA -Key Facts and Figures | Statistics | Higher Education Authority

Internal SRS - course dashboard