

## Medr statistics

### Equality characteristics of students and staff at higher education providers: 2024/25

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**Summary:** Statistics on equality characteristics of students and staff at higher education providers in Wales from the 2018/19 academic year to the 2024/25 academic year

**Theme:** Higher education

**Source:** Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student and Staff records



## Main points

### Students

Students are counted per enrolment, so if a student is enrolled on multiple courses in an academic year then they will be counted multiple times. The data includes enrolments at all Welsh providers that submit data to the HESA student record. This includes providers that are funded directly for higher education provision by Medr and providers in Wales that return data to HESA about specifically designated courses.

- The proportion of enrolments by students with a disability steadily increased from 14% in 2018/19 to 22% in 2024/25.
- The proportion of enrolments by students from the UK with an ethnic minority background increased from 12% in 2018/19 to 17% in 2022/23.
- The majority of enrolments were by female students. 57% of enrolments have been by female students each year since 2022/23.

### Staff

The data about staff relates to staff at the eight universities in Wales who submit data to the HESA staff record. The Open University in Wales is not included as the data collected about Open University staff covers the entire United Kingdom and not Wales specifically.

Staff numbers are calculated using the full-person equivalent for staff at 1 December of the reporting year, for example 1 December 2024 for 2024/25. Staff on atypical contracts are not included in this report as they are not comparable to those on other contract types.

- From 2018/19 to 2024/25, the proportion of staff who had a disability steadily increased.
  - For academic staff the proportion increased from 5% in 2018/19 to 8% in 2024/25.
  - For non-academic staff the proportion increased from 7% in 2018/19 to 11% in 2024/25.
- From 2018/19 to 2024/25, the proportion of staff with an ethnic minority background increased.
  - For academic staff the proportion increased from 12% in 2018/19 to 20% in 2024/25.
  - For non-academic staff the proportion increased from 5% in 2018/19 to 7% in 2024/25.
- The majority of academic staff has historically been male. In 2024/25 there were still slightly more male academic staff (5,560 members of staff) than female (5,495), but both accounted for 50%. In comparison, 53% of academic staff were male in 2018/19.
- The majority of non-academic staff were female. 63% of non-academic staff were female in 2024/25, which is similar to earlier years.

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## Introduction

This document contains a written analysis of age, disability, ethnicity and sex data for students and staff at higher education providers in Wales. It accompanies a [dashboard](#) that can be found on the Medr website.

The data can also be found in an [accompanying spreadsheet](#) on the Medr website.

There is also data on StatsWales:

- [Student enrolments and qualifiers at higher education providers in Wales by personal characteristics](#)
- [Higher education staff in Wales by personal characteristics and standard occupational classification](#)

## Future of this publication

Medr intend to review whether this publication could be incorporated into our [Students in higher education](#) and [Staff at higher education institutions](#) publications as there is considerable overlap. We plan to speak to users to understand whether this can be done without impacting the use of the statistics while making more efficient use of resources.

If you would like to provide your thoughts on this and how you use this publication please contact us at [HEStats@medr.cymru](mailto:HEStats@medr.cymru) by 29 May 2026.

## Students

### Age

#### Sector

Over one third (36%) of student enrolments in 2024/25 were by those aged under 21. The number of enrolments from this age group has increased every year since 2020/21. However the proportion was decreasing until 2022/23 (32%) but increased again in 2023/24 (33%) and 2024/25. This is related to how the numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments have changed across these years.

Since 2022/23, the number of students who are 21 and over has fallen each year. This is also true when looking at the more detailed age groups (21 to 24, 25 to 29, and 30 and over).

#### Providers

The situation at each Welsh HE provider mostly reflected the sector pattern, with increases in the youngest age group but decreases in older age groups. However, there are notable differences in the age profile at certain providers.

In 2024/25, nearly two thirds (65%) of students at the Open University were 30 years old or older, with a further fifth (18%) of students being aged 25 to 29 years old. Only around 5% of Open University students are under 21 each year.

St Padarn's Institute (94%) and the Centre for Alternative Technology (68%) also had the majority of their higher education students being aged 30 or over in 2024/25.

University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Wrexham University both saw large increases in enrolments by those aged 30 and over between 2018/19 and 2022/23. Numbers of enrolments in this age group have declined slightly since but still account for nearly half of enrolments at these providers.

In contrast, several providers had a majority of students who were under 21 in 2024/25. 53% of students at each Aberystwyth University, Cardiff University and Cardiff Metropolitan University were aged under 21 in 2024/25, while just under half (49%) were aged under 21 at Swansea University.

## Disability

The sector level data are presented at the most detailed derived [disability variable](#) in the HESA Student record. This includes a category for those with 'Multiple impairments, health conditions or learning differences'. If a student is counted in this group it means that they are not also counted in the separate disability categories.

At provider level the data are aggregated into two groups: 'Disabled' and 'No known disability'. This is to reduce the risk of disclosing information about individuals due to small numbers.

## Sector

Both the number and the proportion of students disclosing a disability has been steadily increasing year on year. In 2024/25, 22% of the 143,825 enrolments were by a student known to have a disability.

The most common disability category in 2024/25 was learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D. 6% of all students reported having a disability from this category in 2024/25.

The second most common disability category in 2024/25 was having a mental health condition, challenge or disorder such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety. 5% of enrolments in 2024/25 were by students with a disability in this category. This is the category that has seen the largest increase in recent years going from 4,670 students in 2018/19 to 7,165 students in 2024/25.

There has also been a large increase in the number of students with multiple conditions. Between 2018/19 and 2024/25 the number more than tripled, from 2,010 to 6,750, or from 2% to 5% of students. A large part of this increase has been since 2022/23, with the number going from 4,075 to 6,750 between those years alone.

## Providers

There is a general trend of increasing proportions of students having a disability at all providers, although this fluctuates more at providers with a smaller number of enrolments.

In 2024/25 the proportion of students with a known disability at each provider ranged from 6% at Coleg Gwent to 37% at St Padarn's Institute. Of the universities this ranged from 15% at Cardiff University to 31% at Aberystwyth University and the Open University.

## Ethnicity

This section covers the ethnic minority backgrounds of UK-domiciled students. In this section, 'ethnic minority backgrounds' refers to all ethnic backgrounds other than White ethnic backgrounds.

The analysis is restricted to UK-domiciled students as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record only collects ethnicity data for UK-domiciled students.

The sector level data are presented using the most detailed derived [ethnicity variable](#) in the HESA Student record. Although included in the White category, data are collected for the White ethnic minority groups of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Roma'. In 2024/25, there were 60 enrolments by students whose ethnic background was Gypsy or Irish Traveller, and 150 enrolments by students whose ethnic background was Roma.

The provider level data are aggregated into the following groups: Asian, Black, Mixed, Other and White. This is to reduce the risk of disclosing information about individuals due to small numbers.

The quality of this data can be affected by the level of students who are returned with an unknown ethnicity. Across the period the level of unknowns at the sector level has varied between 1% and 3%. Although a relatively small proportion of the total student population, if these unknowns are disproportionately students with ethnic minority backgrounds it would lead to a noticeable under-reporting in the number of students with these ethnic backgrounds.

## Sector

The number and proportion of students with an ethnic minority background have increased steadily year-on-year. In 2024/25, 17% of enrolments by students from the UK were students with an ethnic minority background.

The two largest ethnic minority groups in 2024/25 were 'Mixed and multiple ethnic backgrounds' and 'Black African or Black African British'. These groups accounted for 4% and 3% of all students respectively, and were the largest groups for earlier years too.

Between 2018/19 and 2024/25, the ethnic minority backgrounds where the number of enrolments more than doubled were:

- Any other ethnic background – increased by 105% from 1,115 to 2,290.
- Pakistani or Pakistani British – increased by 101% from 1,285 to 2,580 students, becoming the third largest group in 2024/25.

## Providers

The proportion of students with an ethnic minority background at each provider in 2024/25 ranged from 0% at Gower College Swansea to 35% at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. University of Wales Trinity Saint David had the highest proportion of students (7%) with an unknown ethnic background which may affect this proportion. However, even if all students with an unknown ethnic background were assumed to be White, the proportion of students from an ethnic minority background would still be 32%, which would remain the highest in the sector

Across individual providers the general trend has been an increasing proportion of students from ethnic minority background. Although, for providers with smaller numbers of enrolments there were more fluctuations.

The largest increases in the proportion of students with ethnic minority backgrounds were at:

- University of Wales Trinity Saint David – 23% in 2018/19 to 35% in 2024/25. A factor in this is that the University of Wales Trinity Saint David has campuses in London and Birmingham. This means the figures for University of Wales Trinity Saint David are affected by the population distributions in those areas to a greater extent than otherwise.
- Wrexham University – 5% in 2018/19 to 17% in 2024/25.
- Swansea University – 13% in 2018/19 to 20% in 2024/25.

## Sex

In 2022/23, the option to return that students had refused to provide sex data was introduced. In each year since 2022/23, sex information was refused or unavailable for about 0.2% of students.

## Sector

In each year between 2018/19 and 2024/25, the majority of students were female. This majority has increased slightly over this period from 56% in 2018/19 to 57% in 2024/25.

Although less than 1% of students reported their sex was 'Other', the number of students in this group increased considerably from 155 in 2018/19 to 865 in 2024/25.

## **Providers**

All but four providers had the majority of students being female in 2024/25. The four with male majorities were all smaller providers (Grŵp Colegau NPTC Group of Colleges, Cardiff and Vale College, Coleg Gwent and Coleg Cambria).

In 2022/23 the majorities at each provider ranged from a male majority of 86% at Grŵp Colegau NPTC Group of Colleges to a female majority of 68% at the Open University in Wales.

## Staff

The numbers of staff given are the full-person equivalent based on the HESA staff contract population, which includes those contracts that were active on 1 December in the relevant academic year.

Data relating to atypical staff are not included. Atypical staff are those members of staff whose contracts involve working arrangements that are not permanent, involve complex employment relationships and/or involve work away from the supervision of the normal work provider.

Unlike the HESA student record, the only Welsh providers who submit data to the HESA staff record are the eight universities. The Open University in Wales is not included as the data collected about Open University staff covers the entire United Kingdom and not Wales specifically.

## Age

### Sector – academic staff

The age distribution of academic staff has remained broadly unchanged over recent years.

The largest age group amongst academic staff was the 36 to 45 years group, accounting for 29% of academic staff in 2024/25. A further quarter (26%) were aged between 46 and 55 years old.

There was a reasonably even split of academic staff in the youngest (25 and under) and oldest (66 and over) age groups at 3% and 4% respectively.

### Sector – non-academic staff

As with academic staff, the 36 to 45 years group was the largest age group and has been for many years. In 2024/25, 28% of non-academic staff were aged between 36 and 45.

The largest difference in the age profile of non-academic staff compared to academic staff is in the youngest and oldest age groups. 7% of non-academic staff in 2024/25 were 25 years old or younger, but only 2% were 66 years old or older.

### Providers – academic staff

In 2024/25, there were three providers where the largest age group was not the 36 to 45 year group as generally observed in the sector. These providers were Aberystwyth University, University of South Wales and Wrexham University, where the largest age group was the 46 to 55 years group.

Cardiff University was the only provider where the number of academic staff aged 25 or younger was greater than the number of academic staff aged 66 or older.

## Providers – non-academic staff

There were three providers where the largest age group was different from the sectors largest age group of 36 to 45 years. These providers were Aberystwyth University, Bangor University and Wrexham University. For the first two of these the most common age group for non-academic staff was 46 to 55 years old, while 26 to 34 years old was the most common at Wrexham University.

Aberystwyth University had the largest difference in the youngest and oldest age groups. 14% of non-academic staff at Aberystwyth University were aged 25 or younger, compared to 3% aged 66 or older.

## Disability

The sector level data are presented using the most detailed derived [disability variable](#) in the HESA Staff record. This includes a category for those with 'Multiple impairments, health conditions or learning differences'. If a student is counted in this group it means that they are not also counted in the separate disability categories.

At provider level the data are aggregated into two groups: 'Disabled' and 'No known disability'. This is to reduce the risk of disclosing information about individuals due to small numbers.

## Sector – academic staff

Both the number and the proportion of academic staff declaring a disability have increased steadily for several years. In 2024/25 the number of academic staff was 880, or 8% of all academic staff.

The most common category of disability declared by academic staff was a long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy. 205 (2%) academic staff members declared a disability in this category in 2024/25, increasing from 125 in 2018/19.

The second most common category was a learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D. 190 (2%) members of academic staff had a disability in this category in 2024/25. This compares to 125 staff in 2018/19.

As well as the two disability categories above, the number of staff with a mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety doubled. In 2024/25, 130 academic staff had a disability in this category compared to 65 in 2018/19.

## Sector – non-academic staff

Although the number of non-academic staff with a disability has generally been increasing, there was a slight decrease in 2024/25 (1,165) compared to 2023/24 (1,180). However, the proportion of non-academic staff with a disability increased to 11% in 2024/25.

The most common category of disability declared by non-academic staff was a long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or

epilepsy. 265 (2%) non-academic staff members declared a disability in this category in 2024/25, increasing from 205 in 2018/19.

The second most common category was a learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D. 235 (2%) members of non-academic staff had a disability in this category in 2024/25. This compared to 145 staff in 2018/19.

As well as the two disability categories above, there has been a large increase in the number of non-academic staff with a mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety. In 2024/25, 215 non-academic staff had a disability in this category compared to 110 in 2018/19.

### **Providers – academic staff**

The number and proportion of academic staff declaring a disability between 2018/19 and 2024/25 increased at every provider, except Wrexham University. The figures for Wrexham University were lower in 2023/24 and 2024/25 than previous years.

In 2024/25, the proportion of academic staff declaring a disability at Welsh HE providers varied from 5% at Wrexham University to 13% at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

### **Providers – non-academic staff**

The number and proportion of non-academic staff declaring a disability between 2018/19 and 2024/25 increased at all providers except Wrexham University. While increasing over this period, the number and proportion of non-academic staff with a disability decreased at Bangor University in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

In 2024/25, the proportion of non-academic staff declaring a disability at Welsh HE providers varied from 6% at Wrexham University to 14% at Aberystwyth University.

## **Ethnicity**

In this section, 'ethnic minority backgrounds' refers to all ethnic backgrounds other than White ethnic backgrounds. Data are collected for the white ethnic minority groups of 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' and 'Roma'. The numbers of staff with these ethnic backgrounds have been in the single figures each year.

The sector level data are presented with the same detailed categories as the student data.

The provider level data are aggregated into the following groups: Asian, Black, Mixed, Other and White. This is to reduce the risk of disclosing information about individuals due to small numbers.

There was a considerable proportion of staff whose ethnicity was returned as either not known, prefer not to say or not available. This affects how representative the data is of the entire staff population and should be considered when interpreting the data. In 2024/25, 11% of academic staff across the sector were in this category, having increased from 6% in 2018/19. The impact will be particularly noticeable at the University of South Wales where 34% of academic staff were returned with an unknown ethnicity. For non-

academic staff the percentage of staff with these unknown ethnicity values has varied between 3% and 5%, and was at 4% in 2024/25.

### **Sector – academic staff**

The number and proportion of academic staff with an ethnic minority background has increased between 2018/19 and 2024/25. Of academic staff whose ethnic background was known, 12% had an ethnic minority background in 2018/19 and this increased to 20% in 2024/25.

Chinese or Chinese British has been the largest ethnic minority background group amongst academic staff since 2018/19 and accounted for 4% of academic staff in 2024/25.

### **Sector – non-academic staff**

The number and proportion of non-academic staff with an ethnic minority background increased between 2018/19 and 2024/25. Of non-academic staff whose ethnic background was known, 5% had an ethnic minority background in 2018/19 and this increased to 7% in 2024/25.

The Mixed or Multiple ethnic backgrounds group was the largest ethnic minority background group amongst non-academic staff and accounted for 2% of non-academic staff in 2024/25.

### **Providers – academic staff**

The proportion of academic staff from an ethnic minority background in 2024/25 ranged from 10% at Aberystwyth University to 28% at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

For all providers the most common ethnic minority background amongst academic staff was Asian in 2024/25. This was also the case in most previous years.

### **Providers – non-academic staff**

The proportion of non-academic staff from an ethnic minority background in 2024/25 ranged from 4% at Bangor University to 12% at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

For all providers the most common ethnic minority background amongst non-academic staff was Asian in 2024/25. This was mostly the case in previous years as well.

## **Sex**

In 2022/23, the option to return that staff have refused to provide sex data was introduced. This means that since 2022/23 there has been a small number of staff where sex information was not provided.

## **Sector – academic staff**

There were more male academic staff than female every year from 2018/19 to 2024/25. However, numbers have become more even and in 2024/25 they both accounted for 50% of staff, with a difference of less than 70 out of 11,085 academic staff.

## **Sector - non-academic staff**

In 2024/25 63% of non-academic staff were female. This proportion has been approximately the same for several years.

## **Providers – academic staff**

At provider level there was a mix of providers having either male or female majorities amongst their academic staff in 2024/25. However, for most providers the proportion of academic staff who are female has been increasing in recent years. The exception to this was University of Wales Trinity Saint David where the proportion of academic staff who are female has been decreasing, although in 2024/25 it was the provider with the most balanced proportion of male and female academic staff.

In 2024/25 the majorities ranged from a 62% female majority at Wrexham University to a 54% male majority at Swansea University.

## **Providers - non-academic staff**

From 2018/19 to 2024/25 the majority of non-academic staff has been female at every provider in every year.

In 2024/25 the sizes of these female majorities ranged from 57% at Aberystwyth University to 64% at Bangor University, Cardiff University and the University of South Wales.

## Quality and methodology information

### Data sources

The HESA Student and Staff records are both collected by HESA, which is part of Jisc.

A summary of the data collection process of the [Student record](#) is available on the HESA website, including all the quality rules used to check the quality of the data. Similar information about the process for the [Staff record](#) is also available.

### Coverage

#### Students

The data includes students enrolled on HE courses at providers in Wales that are funded directly for higher education provision by Medr and providers in Wales that return data to HESA about specifically designated higher education courses.

From 2023/24, the data includes data for five HE providers that had not previously submitted data to the HESA student record. These were:

- Centre for Alternative Technology
- Cardiff and Vale College
- Coleg Cambria
- Coleg Gwent
- St Padarn's Institute

The Union School of Theology also returned data in 2023/24 for the first time, but not in 2024/25 as they did not have any specifically designated courses to return and so were no longer in scope.

The enrolments included are those in the HESA standard registration population at Welsh HE providers. A student may have more than one enrolment in an academic year: if this is the case then each enrolment is counted separately.

To be included in the HESA standard population, an enrolment needs to be active in study at least two weeks after their engagement start date or subsequent anniversaries of. Students who are writing-up (and have no active study) after this anniversary date are excluded from the population, as are students expected to study for two weeks or less and who don't complete their studies or gain a qualification. Dormant students, incoming visiting and exchange students from overseas and students studying for the whole of their programme of study outside of the UK are also excluded.

#### Staff

The only Welsh providers who submit data to the HESA staff record are the eight universities in Wales. The Open University in Wales is not included as the data submitted by the Open University covers the staff for the entire United Kingdom and not Wales specifically.

This report excludes staff who are employed on an atypical contract as they are not comparable to those on other contract types. Staff on an atypical contract are those whose contracts involve working arrangements that are not permanent, involve complex employment relationships and/or involve work away from the supervision of the normal work provider.

Staff numbers are calculated using the full-person equivalent for staff at 1 December of the reporting year, for example 1 December 2024 for 2024/25.

## **Definitions**

### **Academic and non-academic staff**

Academic staff contracts are for planning, directing and undertaking academic teaching and research. This includes lecturers and researchers, but also Vice chancellors, and medical professionals who undertake research.

Non-academic staff contracts include managers, professionals in non-academic jobs, student welfare workers, secretaries, caretakers and cleaners.

### **Age**

Age as at 31 August in the reporting year, e.g. 31 August 2024 for 2024/25.

### **Disability**

Disability information is collected based on a self-assessment basis and there is no obligation for students or staff to declare any disabilities they have. This information is collected every year so may change over time.

### **Ethnicity**

For students, ethnicity information is only collected for those whose permanent address prior to starting their studies is in the UK, Guernsey, Jersey or the Isle of Man, and is collected based on the student's self-assessment. This information is collected every year so may change over time.

For staff, ethnicity information is collected for all staff on a self-assessment basis so may change over time due to being re-collected.

### **Full-person equivalent (Staff)**

Individuals can hold more than one contract with a provider and each contract may involve more than one activity. In analyses, staff counts have been divided amongst the activities in proportion to the declared full-time equivalent for each activity. This results in counts of full person equivalents (FPE). Staff FPE counts are calculated on the basis of contract activities that were active on 1 December of the reporting period.

For example, if a member of staff has an academic contract to work 3 days a week and a non-academic contract to work 1 day a week, they would be counted as 0.75 members of staff with an academic contract and 0.25 members of staff with a non-academic contract.

## Sex

The HESA student record collects the sex of students and staff rather than the gender with which they identify.

## Rounding

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5. Totals are calculated on unrounded figures and then rounded to the nearest 5 so may not equal the sum of the constituent parts.

Percentages are calculated using the unrounded figures. This may mean the percentages may not match what would be calculated using rounded figures.

## Related statistics

[Students in Higher Education](#) contains more general information about students in higher education in Wales, and from Wales studying across the UK.

[Staff at higher education institutions](#) contains more general information about higher education staff in Wales.

[Further education, work-based learning and community learning](#) includes information about the characteristics of learners in further education, work-based learning and community learning.

Medr does not publish any statistics on further education staff, however the Education Workforce Council (EWC) publish statistics about staff in the:

- Maintained school sector
- Further education sector
- Adult learning sector
- Qualified youth sector
- Independent sector

These can be found on the [EWC website](#).

## Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in Medr's [Statement of Compliance](#) with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

These official statistics demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and value in the following ways.

## Trustworthiness

These statistics have been published according to Medr's [Statement of Compliance](#) and [pre-release access to official statistics policy](#).

## Quality

The data sources for this publication are the HESA Student and Staff records. There are a number of validation processes to ensure data submitted to both records is of good quality. These include the data being checked against quality rules and checks against data from previous years. Any issues found through these checks are raised with providers so they can either provide an explanation, or submit corrected data if there is an error. This is an iterative process where data goes through this process multiple times until it is ready to be signed off.

Medr also meet with providers throughout the year to gain an understanding of any data quality issues that may arise for individual providers and to provide support in resolving the issues.

## Value

These statistics are produced to provide an insight into equalities characteristics of students and staff in the higher education sector in Wales. They are used both within Medr and the Welsh Government to monitor trends in the higher education sector. Some of the key users are:

- Officials and Board members in Medr
- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the Senedd
- Officials in the Welsh Government
- Higher Education providers and representative bodies

## Contact information

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics.

Feedback, questions, and requests for further data can be directed by email to: [HESstats@medr.cymru](mailto:HESstats@medr.cymru)