

Inequalities in Education

Facts and Trends
1998 - 2008



RESEARCH REPORT

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

BACKGROUND

In October 2007, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland published its *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland*¹. This Statement identified education as one of six broad areas where inequalities exist and need to be addressed. Education is recognised as playing an important role in determining a person's life chances and opportunities. Poor educational attainment is seen as a barrier to both entering and progressing in employment.

While this report does not seek to replace the Commission's *Statement on Key Inequalities*, it does seek to present the latest educational data relevant to that statement, and to compare that to data from ten years previous. Over the period 1998 and 2008, this report presents evidence of the differentials in the educational attainment within the areas of Community Background, Gender and Disability and for the specific groups of Children in Care and Traveller Children. These groups were selected due to their identification in the Commission's *Statement on Key Inequalities* as key groups for whom educational inequalities exist. Other key groups identified in the Commission's *Statement on Key Inequalities* were those from Black and Ethnic Minority communities and those identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. However, detailed quantitative data on educational attainment proved problematical to obtain for these groups, most likely due to small sample sizes.

This publication draws on key government data sources, namely the Labour Force Survey, the Qualifications and Destinations of School Leavers Survey, the Enrolments in Further Education dataset, the Enrolments in Higher Education dataset and the Northern Ireland Care Leavers Survey.

NOTES

A Glossary of terms and Technical Notes on the data used in the report are located at the end of this report.

¹ Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2007). *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland*. Belfast, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

1.1 Educational Attainment

1.1.1 Amongst the population of Northern Ireland, in 2008 the highest level of **attainment** for Protestants and Roman Catholics was broadly similar, regardless of economic status – active or inactive. Differences did emerge with regards to:

- GCSE A*-C, where Protestants were more likely than Roman Catholics to hold this as their highest qualification.
- economic **inactivity**, where Roman Catholics were more likely than their Protestant counterparts to have **no qualifications**.

1.1.2 Amongst school leavers, over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08, a gap in the highest level of educational attainment had emerged:

- In 1998/99 educational attainment levels of Protestants and Roman Catholics were similar;
- By 2007/08 the proportion of students leaving school with **2 or more A-levels A-E** had increased at a lower rate for Protestants (10 percentage points) than for Roman Catholics (15 percentage points).

1.2. Educational Destinations

1.2.1 In 2007/08, Protestants were less likely than Roman Catholics to enrol in third level education.

- Amongst school leavers, Protestants were more likely than Roman Catholics to say they **intended** going on to Further Education and less likely than Roman Catholics to say they intended going on to Higher Education.
- However, a lower proportion of Protestants than Roman Catholics were **actually enrolled** in both Further Education and Higher Education.

1.2.2 Between 1998/99 and 2007/08 the pattern of enrolments for Protestants and Roman Catholics in Further Education and Higher Education has remained broadly unchanged.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. GENDER

2.1. Educational Attainment

2.1.1 **Amongst the Northern Ireland population**, in 2007/08 working age females were more likely than males to be qualified to **degree or above**. Working age males were more likely than females to have left the education system with **no qualifications**.

- A greater proportion of working age males than females had A-levels as their highest qualification. This suggests that more working age males exit the education system at this point. However, a greater proportion of females than males left school with **2 or more A-levels A-E**, and have historically done so.

2.1.2 Over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08 the gap in educational attainment of males and females has widened.

- Amongst the Northern Ireland population the proportion of economically active males holding a **degree or above** has increased at a lower rate than for females. Further, the proportion of economically active and inactive males holding **no qualifications** has remained broadly unchanged, while the proportion of females has decreased.
- The proportion of both males and females **leaving school with 2 or more A-levels A-E** has increased substantially (28% to 38% males, 42% to 56% females). However, in parallel the gap in achievement has also widened (from 14% to 18%) with females outperforming males

2.2 Educational Destinations

2.2.1 In 2007/08 males were less likely than females to continue on to third level education.

- Amongst school leavers, males were less likely to say they **intended** going on to Higher Education than females. Similar proportions of males and females intended to progress to Further Education.
- In terms of **actual enrolments**, a slightly lower proportion of males than females were enrolled in Further Education, and a considerably lower proportion of males than females were enrolled in **Higher Education**.

2.2.2 Between 1998/99 and 2007/08, the gap in the proportion of males and females enrolled in **Further Education** has decreased, reflecting increased male participation. In **Higher**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education, males have consistently had lower participation than females, with the actual proportions of both genders enrolled remaining unchanged over this ten year period.

2.2.3 Between 1998/99 and 2007/08, there has been little change in the patterns of subject choice for males and females in **Further** and **Higher Education**, with both groups opting to study different subject areas in both sectors.

- In Further Education, **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** has remained almost exclusively an area of preference for males. In contrast, **Health & Social Care** courses have remained almost exclusively female.
- In Higher Education, **Maths, Computer Science & Technology** was the most popular subject area for males but had low participation rates of females. In comparison, **Medical Sciences** was the most popular subject area for females, while lower levels of males opted for this area.

3. DISABILITY

3.1 Educational Attainment

3.1.1 Amongst the Northern Ireland population, in 2008 economically active and inactive people with a declared disability had lower overall levels of attainment, and were more likely to hold **no qualifications**, than those without a declared disability

3.1.2 Overall, between 1998 and 2008 the **gap** between the educational attainment of working age people with and without a declared disability has **widened**. However there have been changes in the attainment levels of people with a declared disability, particularly for those economically active.

- The proportion of economically active people with a declared disability holding a **degree and above** has increased, but at a lower rate than for those without a declared disability.
- The proportion of economically **active** people with a declared disability with **no qualifications** has fluctuated but overall decreased (34% to 25%). The proportion of economically active without a declared disability and with **no qualifications** has remained broadly unchanged (around 15 to 16%).
- The proportion of economically **inactive** people with a declared disability holding **no qualifications** has remained broadly unchanged, while the proportion of those without a declared disability has decreased.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.2 Educational Destinations

3.2.1 Overall, people with a declared disability were less likely to enrol in **Further and Higher Education** than those without a declared disability.

3.2.2 Since 1998/99, there has been little change in the proportions of those with and without a declared disability enrolling in **Further Education** (around 4%), while the proportion of people with a declared disability enrolling in **Higher Education** has increased (from 4% to 7% in 2007/08).

3.2.3 Overall, in 2007/08, people with a declared disability were more likely to be enrolled at lower levels of study in **third level education** than those without a declared disability.

- People with a declared disability were considerably more likely to be enrolled at **level 1 & entry level** and less likely to be enrolled at every other level of **Further Education** than those without a declared disability.
- People with a declared disability were slightly more likely to be enrolled at undergraduate level of **Higher Education** than those without a declared disability.

3.2.4 Overall, people with and without a declared disability chose to study relatively different subject areas in **Further Education**, but similar subject areas in **Higher Education**. For example, in Further Education colleges, **Education** was the most popular subject area for people **with** a declared disability in each of the years, but only featured once in the top three subject areas for those **without** a declared disability, in 2007/08. In Higher Education, **Arts and Humanities** has been the most popular subject area for people with a disability while **Medical Sciences** has been the most popular subject area for people without a disability. Of note was that, over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08, increases in the proportions of students enrolling on **Medical Sciences** have been more marked for those with a declared disability (11 to 17%) than for those without a declared disability (18% to 21%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4. IRISH TRAVELLERS

4.1 Educational Attainment

4.1.1 Over the aggregate period 2003/04-2007/08, there has been a noticeable gap between the highest educational attainment of Traveller and non-Traveller school leavers. In this period, a majority (58%) of Irish Travellers left school with **no GCSE qualifications**. This compares with **5%** of non-Traveller school leavers.

4.2 Educational Destinations

4.2.1 Overall, in 2003/04-2007/08, school leavers who were Irish Travellers were less likely than non-Travellers to say they would be going on to **Further and Higher Education or training**. For example, in this aggregated time-period, zero percent of Irish Travellers indicated they intended to continue on to **Higher Education**.

4.2.2 In 2003/04-2007/08 school leavers who were Irish Travellers were more likely than non-Travellers to say they were going on to **unemployment**.

5. YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

5.1 Educational Attainment

5.1.1 In 2007/08, the majority of Care-leavers (53%) left school with no **GCSE qualifications**. This compares with 4% of all school leavers.

5.1.2 Between 2001 and 2008 the gap between the highest educational attainment of Care-leavers and all school leavers has widened slightly.

- Since 2001 the proportions of Care-leavers leaving school with **A-levels A-E** has remained broadly unchanged (around 2%), while the proportion of all school leavers has increased (41% to 49%).

5.2 Educational Destinations

5.2.1 In 2007/08, Care-leavers were less likely than all school leavers to say they would be continuing on to **Further and Higher Education or training** and more likely to say they would be going on to **unemployment**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5.2.2 Between 2001 and 2008, the gap between the proportions of Care-leavers and all school leavers saying they would continue on to **Further** and **Higher Education** has widened slightly.

CONCLUSIONS

When the different groups are compared, **community background** is the area where fewest differences exist in 2007/08. Amongst the **population**, the economically active from both communities hold very similar levels of highest education attainment. Amongst **school leavers**, there has been considerable improvement in the **highest level of educational attainment** of both communities, although this rate of improvement has been slightly greater for Roman Catholics than for Protestants. Thus, the gap between highest educational attainment of Protestant and Roman Catholic school leavers has widened.

Some differences are notable when looking at **gender**, particularly with regards to **levels of highest educational attainment** and **subject choices** within Further or Higher Education. Economically active females are more likely than males to hold a higher level of education attainment. In addition, while there has been considerable improvement in the **highest level of educational attainment** of both males and females **school leavers**, this improvement has been markedly more evident for females than for males. Thus, the gap between highest educational attainment of male and female school leavers has widened.

There are still considerable differences in the **highest educational attainment** and in participation in **Further or Higher Education** between those with and without a declared disability. Economically active people **without** a declared disability remain more likely than those **with** a declared disability to hold a **higher level of education attainment**. In addition, while there has been considerable improvement in the highest level of educational attainment of economically active people with and without a declared disability, this improvement has been markedly more evident for those without a declared disability. With regards to participation in **third-level education**, while those with a declared disability remain under-represented at this level, an **improvement** has occurred in the proportion who are accessing institutes of **Higher Education** in Northern Ireland.

While it was not possible, due to low numbers, to examine trends in the highest educational attainment of **Irish Travellers** and non-Travellers, over the aggregate period 2003/04-2007/08 there has been a noticeable gap between the highest education attainment and destinations of the two groups. The majority of Irish Travellers left school with **no GCSEs**, while the majority of non-Travellers left school with **GCSE or higher** qualifications. The most common intended **non-employment destination** for Irish Travellers leaving school was **unemployment**, while the most common intended destination for non-Travellers was **Higher Education**. Furthermore, in the aggregated time-period examined, zero percent of Irish Travellers indicated they intended to continue on to **Higher Education**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the comparator years for **children in care** differ somewhat to those for other groups, it is still evident that care leavers exit secondary education with **lower educational attainment levels** than all school leavers and have lower rates of going on to an educational destination. **Little or no improvement** in the educational attainment levels and non-employment destinations of **Care-leavers** leaving school occurred between 2001/02 and 2007/08. In comparison, there has been an **improvement** in the highest level of educational attainment of **all school leavers**, and in the proportion of all school leavers continuing on to third level education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>COMMUNITY BACKGROUND</u>	1
1. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults</u>	2
2. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults</u>	3
3. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers</u>	4
4. <u>Educational Destinations of School Leavers</u>	5
5. <u>Participation in Further Education</u>	7
6. <u>Participation in Higher Education</u>	9
<u>GENDER</u>	12
1. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults</u>	13
2. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults</u>	14
3. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers</u>	16
4. <u>Educational Destinations of School Leavers</u>	17
5. <u>Participation in Further Education</u>	18
6. <u>Participation in Higher Education</u>	21
<u>DISABILITY</u>	24
1. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults</u>	25
2. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults</u>	26
3. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers</u>	28
4. <u>Educational Destinations of School Leavers</u>	28
5. <u>Participation in Further Education</u>	28
6. <u>Participation in Higher Education</u>	32
<u>IRISH TRAVELLERS</u>	35
1. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults</u>	35
2. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults</u>	35
3. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers</u>	35
4. <u>Non-employment Destinations of School Leavers</u>	36
5. <u>Participation in Further Education</u>	37
6. <u>Participation in Higher Education</u>	37
<u>CHILDREN IN CARE</u>	38
1. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults</u>	38
2. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults</u>	38
3. <u>Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers</u>	38
4. <u>Non-employment Destinations of School Leavers</u>	40
5. <u>Participation in Further Education</u>	41
6. <u>Participation in Higher Education</u>	41
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	42
<u>APPENDIX 1: ENROLMENTS IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION</u>	45
<u>GLOSSARY</u>	46
<u>TECHNICAL NOTES</u>	48

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: Highest Educational Qualification of Economically Active Working Age Adults from a Protestant Background, 1998-2008	2
Chart 2: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age Adults from a Roman Catholic Background, 1998-2008	3
Chart 3: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Adults from a Protestant background, 1998-2008	4
Chart 4: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Adults from a Roman Catholic Background, 1998-2008	4
Chart 5: School leavers' Highest Educational Attainment by Community Background	5
Chart 6: School leavers' Stated Educational Destinations by Community Background	6
Chart 7: Level of study at Further Education by Community Background	8
Chart 8: Level of study at Higher Education by Community Background	20
Chart 9: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age Males, 1998-2008	14
Chart 10: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age Females, 1998-2008	14
Chart 11: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Males, 1998-2008	15
Chart 12: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Females, 1998-2008	16
Chart 13: School leavers' Highest Educational Attainment by Gender	17
Chart 14: School leavers' Stated Educational Destinations by Gender	18
Chart 15: Level of study at Further Education by Gender	19
Chart 16: Level of study at Higher Education by Gender	22
Chart 17: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age People with a Declared Disability, 1998-2008	26
Chart 18: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age People without a Declared Disability, 1998-2008	26
Chart 19: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age People with a Declared Disability, 1998-2008	27
Chart 20: Highest Educational Attainment of the Economically Inactive Working Age People without a Declared Disability, 1998-2008	28
Chart 21: Level of study at Further Education by Declared Disability / No Declared Disability	30
Chart 22: Level of study at Higher Education by Declared Disability/ No Declared Disability	33
Chart 23: Irish Traveller / non-Traveller School Leavers' Highest Educational Attainment	36
Chart 24: Irish Traveller/ non-Traveller School Leavers' Stated Non-Employment Destinations	37
Chart 25: Care-leavers / All School Leavers Highest Level of Education Attainment	39
Chart 26: Care-leavers / All School Leavers Stated Non-Employment Destinations	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Further Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order for Protestant and Roman Catholic students	9
Table 2: Higher Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order for Protestant and Roman Catholic students.....	11
Table 3: Further Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order for Male and Female Students.....	21
Table 4: Higher Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order for Male and Female Students.....	23
Table 5: Further Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order for students with / without without a Declared Disability	32
Table 6: Higher Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order for students with / without a Declared Disability.....	34

Summary: Community Background

1.1 Educational Attainment

1.1.1 Amongst the population of Northern Ireland, in 2008 the highest level of **attainment** for Protestants and Roman Catholics was broadly similar, regardless of economic status – active or inactive. Differences did emerge with regards to:

- GCSE A*-C, where Protestants were more likely than Roman Catholics to hold this as their highest qualification.
- economic **inactivity**, where Roman Catholics were more likely than their Protestant counterparts to have **no qualifications**.

1.1.2 Amongst school leavers, over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08, a gap in the highest level of educational attainment had emerged:

- In 1998/99 educational attainment levels of Protestants and Roman Catholics were similar;
- By 2007/08 the proportion of students leaving school with **2 or more A-levels A-E** had increased at a lower rate for Protestants (10 percentage points) than for Roman Catholics (15 percentage points).

1.3. Educational Destinations

1.2.1 In 2007/08, Protestants were less likely than Roman Catholics to enrol in third level education.

- Amongst school leavers, Protestants were more likely than Roman Catholics to say they **intended** going on to Further Education and less likely than Roman Catholics to say they intended going on to Higher Education.
- However, a lower proportion of Protestants than Roman Catholics were **actually enrolled** in both Further Education and Higher Education.

1.2.2 Between 1998/99 and 2007/08 the pattern of enrolments for Protestants and Roman Catholics in Further Education and Higher Education has remained broadly unchanged.

Community Background

1. Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults

This section present evidence of the highest educational attainment of economically active Protestants and Roman Catholics (Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)².

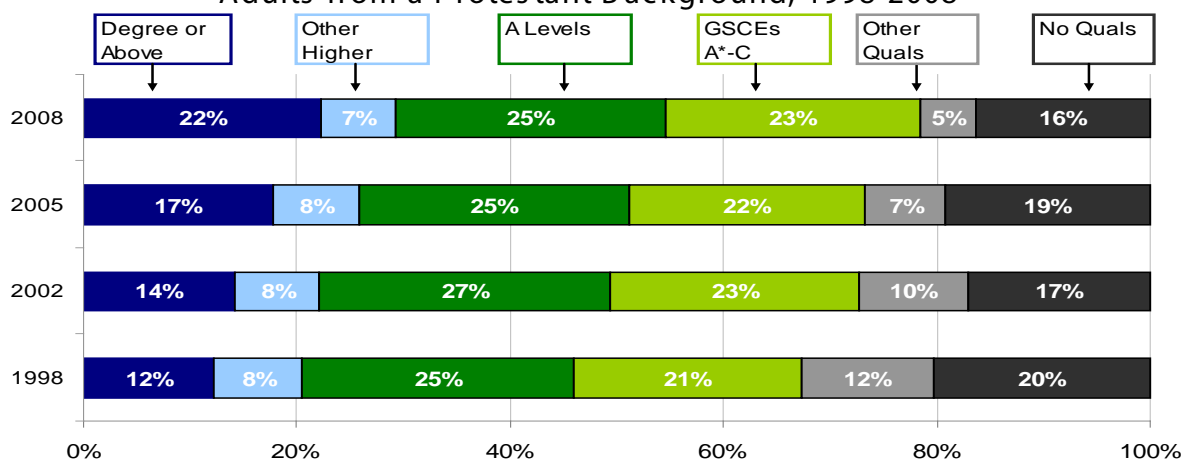
In 2008, with the exception of GCSE A*-C, the highest educational attainment level of economically active Protestants and Roman Catholics was similar (see Chart 1-2).

- In 2008, economically active Protestants (23%) were more likely than Roman Catholics (16%) to hold **GCSEs A*-C** as their highest educational qualification.

In considering trends over time, between 1998 and 2008 there has been a notable **increase** in the proportions of economically active adults from both communities who hold a **degree or above** as their highest educational qualification. For both communities there has also been an overall **downward** trend in the proportions of those with **no qualifications**. (see Charts 1 & 2).

- The proportion of economically active Protestants holding **degree or above** as their highest educational attainment has almost doubled (12% to 22%). The proportion of Roman Catholics holding a **degree or above** has increased from 15% to 24% over the same period.
- The proportion of economically active Protestants and Roman Catholics with no qualifications has decreased by similar amounts (20% to 16% both).

Chart 1: Highest Educational Qualification of Economically Active Working Age Adults from a Protestant Background, 1998-2008

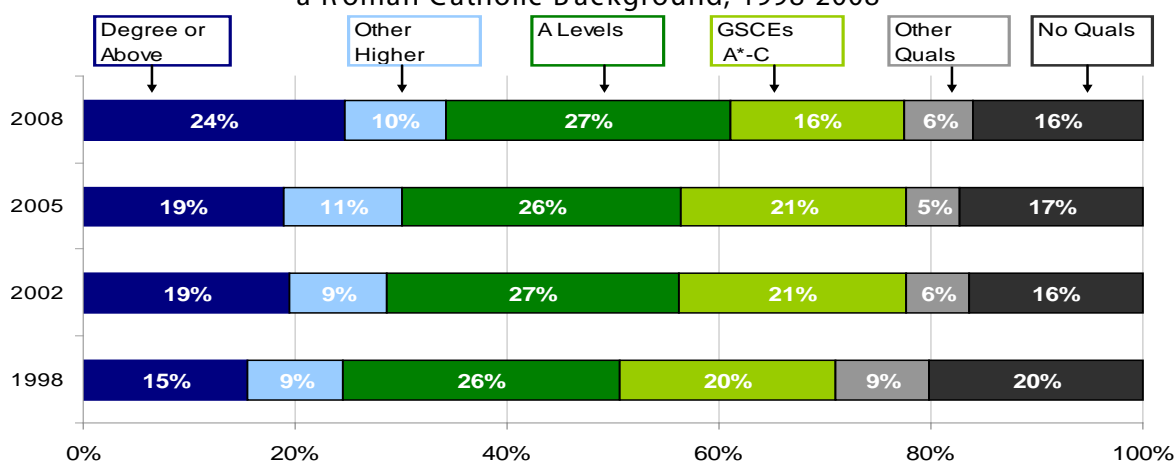


Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Trade, Investment and Enterprise NI (DETINI)

² Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

Community Background

Chart 2: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age Adults from a Roman Catholic Background, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

2. Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults

This section presents evidence of the highest educational attainment of economically inactive Protestants and Roman Catholics (Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)³.

Overall, the highest educational attainment of economically inactive adults is lower than economically active adults, irrespective of community background.

In 2008, with the exception of GCSE A*-C, the highest educational attainment level of economically inactive Protestants and Roman Catholics was similar (see Chart 3-4).

- A greater proportion of economically inactive Protestants (27%) than Roman Catholics (21%) held **GCSEs A*-C**;
- A lower proportion of economically inactive Protestants (35%) than Roman Catholics (40%) held **no qualifications**.

In considering trends over time, between 1998 and 2008 there have been improvements in the educational attainment of economically inactive Protestant and Roman Catholic adults. However, in general the rate of improvement for Protestants has been more marked than for Roman Catholics (see Chart 3-4).

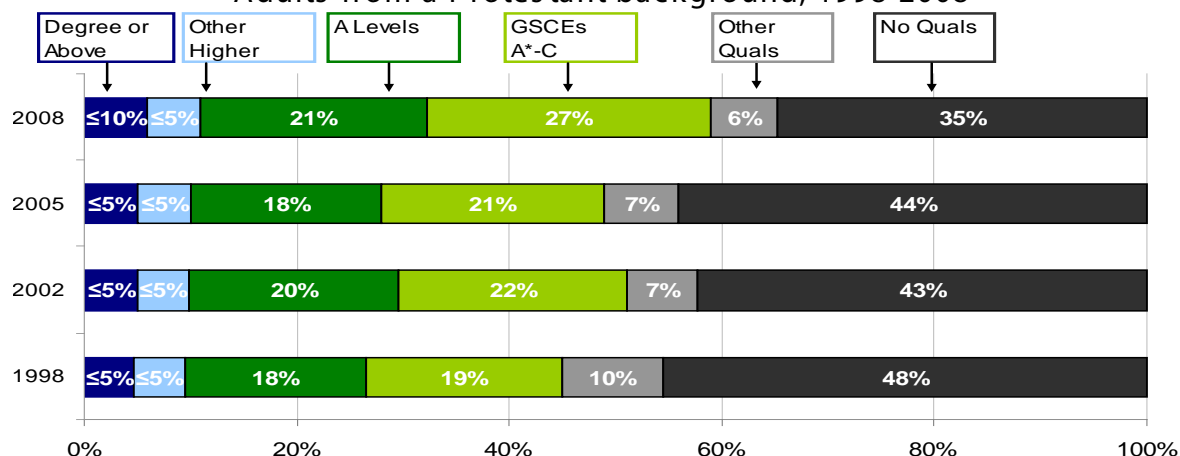
- In 1998 there was little difference in the educational attainment of economically inactive Protestants and Roman Catholics.

³ Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

Community Background

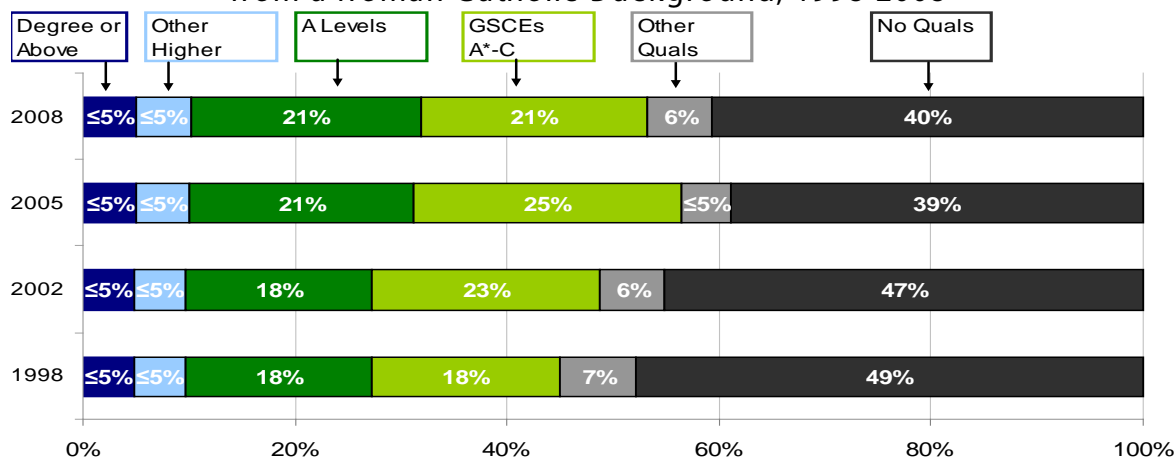
- Between 1998 and 2008 the proportion of economically inactive adults with **GCSEs A*-C** as their highest qualification has increased at a greater rate for Protestants (19% to 27%) than Roman Catholics (18% to 21%).
- The proportion of economically inactive adults with **no qualifications** has decreased at a greater rate for Protestants (48% to 35%) than for Roman Catholics (49% to 40%).

Chart 3: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Adults from a Protestant background, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

Chart 4: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Adults from a Roman Catholic Background, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

3. Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers

Using data from the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education), this section examines the **highest educational attainment** of all Protestant and Roman Catholic school leavers in Northern Ireland.

Community Background

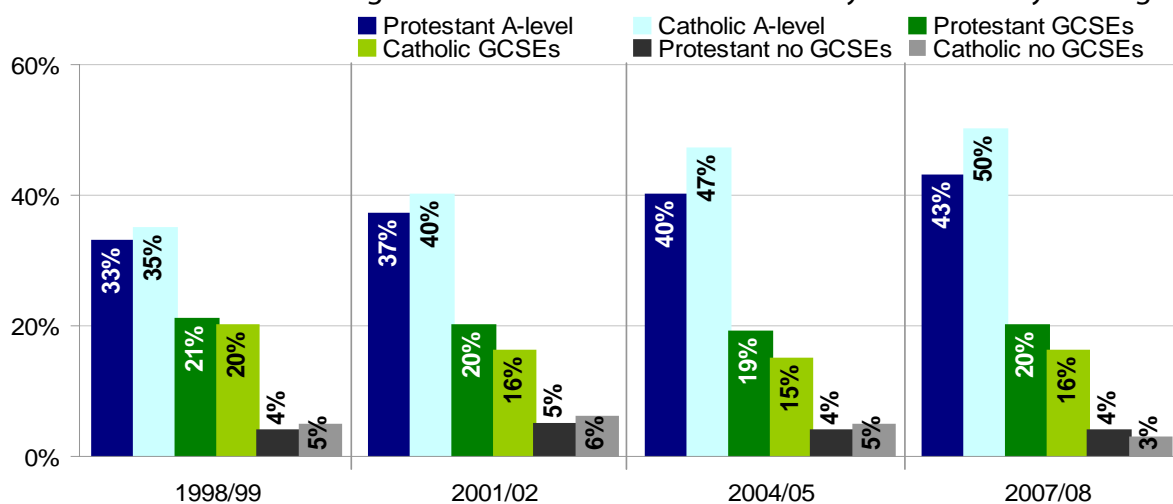
In 2007/08 (see Chart 5), there were observed differences in the highest educational attainment level of Protestant and Roman Catholics school leavers:

- Proportionately, fewer Protestant (43%) than Roman Catholic (50%) school leavers achieved **2 or more A-levels A-E**;
- In a similar vein, Protestant school leavers (20%) were proportionately more likely than Roman Catholics (16%) to leave school with **5 or more GCSEs A*-C**.

Differences in the highest level of educational qualifications of Protestant and Roman Catholics school-leavers have widened from 1998 to 2008 (see Chart 5).

- In 1998/99 the educational attainment of Protestant and Roman Catholic school leavers was similar;
- Between 1998 and 2008, increases in the proportions of Protestants leaving school with **2 or more A-levels A-E** were less marked than for Roman Catholics (10 percentage points vs.15 percentage points);
- The proportion of Protestants leaving school with 5 or more **GCSEs A*-C** has remained relatively unchanged (around 20%), while, the proportion of Roman Catholics has decreased slightly (20% to 16%).

Chart 5: School leavers' Highest Educational Attainment by Community Background



Source: School Leavers Survey, Department of Education NI (DENI)

4. Educational Destinations of School Leavers

Using data from the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education), this section examines the **intended educational destinations** of all Protestant and Roman Catholic school leavers in Northern Ireland.

Community Background

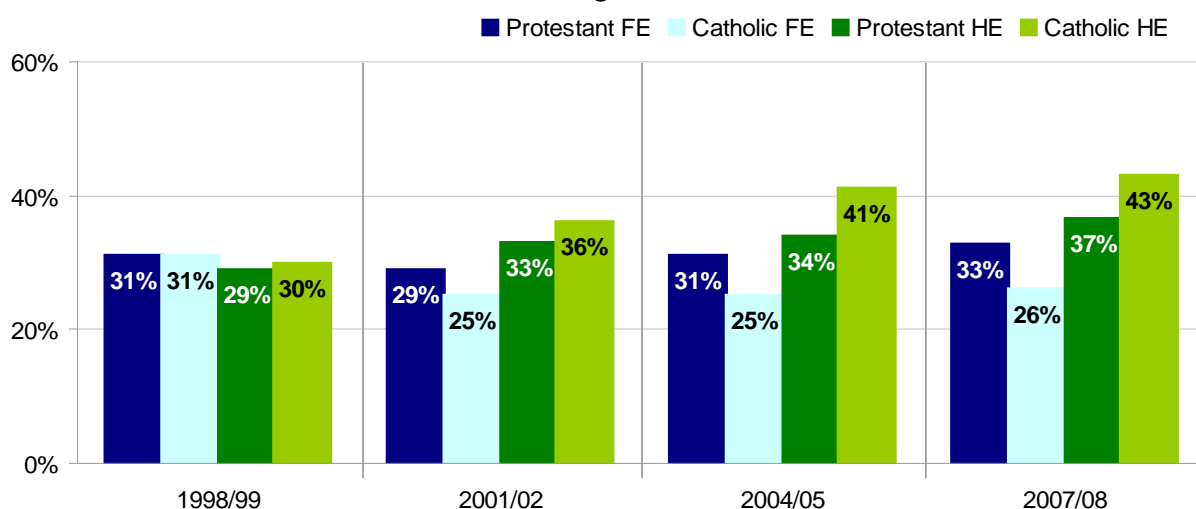
In 2007/08 Protestant school leavers were more likely than Roman Catholics to say they were going on to **Further Education** and less likely to say they were going on to **Higher Education** (see Chart 6).

- A higher proportion of Protestants (33%) said they were going on to **Further Education** compared to those from a Roman Catholic background (26%).
- A lower proportion (37%) of Protestants said they were going on to **Higher Education** compared to Roman Catholics (43%).

Between 1998 and 2008, there has been a greater tendency towards Higher Education for both communities. However, the rate of increase in stated aspiration towards Higher Education has been greater for Roman Catholic school-leavers (see Chart 6).

- In 1998/99 there was little difference in the intended educational destinations of Protestants and Roman Catholics.
- Between 1998 and 2008 increases in the proportions of Protestants intending to go on to **Higher Education** were less marked than for Roman Catholics (8 percentage points vs. 13 percentage points)
- Between 1998 and 2008 the proportion of Roman Catholic school leavers intending to go on to **Further Education** has decreased (31% to 26%) whilst the proportions of Protestant school leavers has fluctuated at around 31%.

Chart 6: School leavers' stated Educational Destinations by Community Background



Source: School Leavers Survey, DENI

5. Participation in Further Education

This section examines the actual participation of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Further Education (Source: Department for Employment and Learning). Student **enrolments** in Further Education, **level of study** and **subject choice** were examined.

Enrolments in Further Education

In 2007/08, a lower proportion of Protestants (45%) than Roman Catholics (55%) were enrolled in **Further Education**. This has remained broadly unchanged from 1998 to 2008.⁴

Level of study in Further Education

In 2007/08 similar proportions of Protestants and Roman Catholics enrolled in the different level of study in Further Education. Small differences emerged with regards to:

- **Level 3** [A-levels or equiv.], were a slightly higher proportion of Protestant students (31%) than Roman Catholic students (28%) enrolled.
- **Level 1 & entry level** [GCSEs D-G or equiv], were a slightly lower proportion of Protestant students (25%) than Roman Catholic students (29%) enrolled.

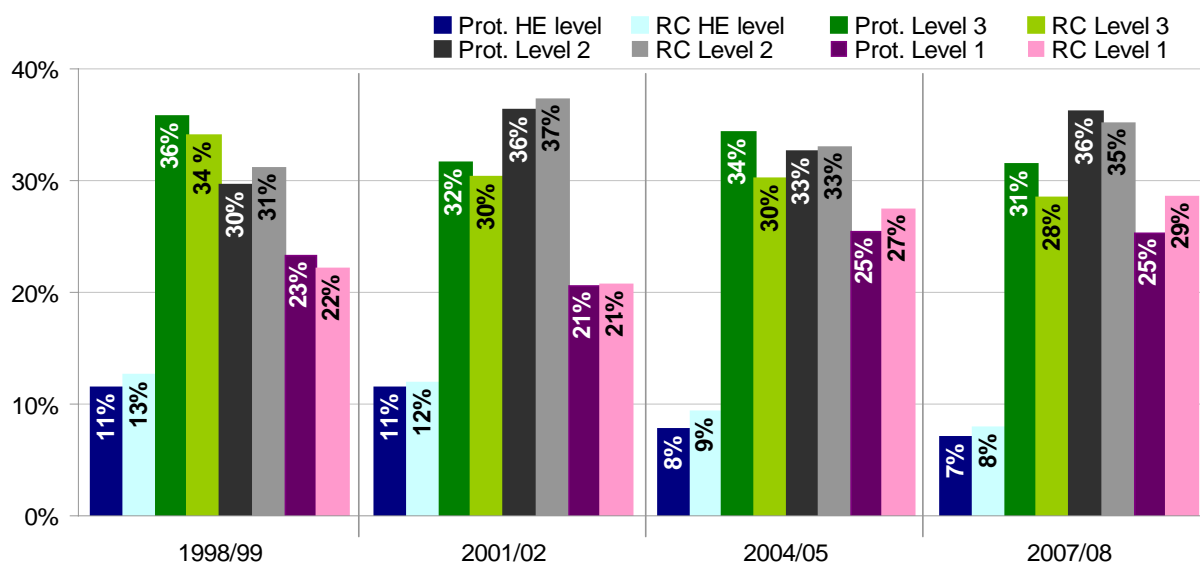
Over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08, there has been an overall decline in the proportion of students from both communities studying at the **two highest levels** of Further Education and a corresponding increase in the proportions studying at the **two lowest levels**.

- The proportions of both Protestants (11% to 7%) and Roman Catholics (13% to 8%) studying at **Higher Education level** [Cert HE or above] has decreased, as has the proportions of both groups studying at **level 3** [A-levels or equiv.] (36% to 31% P.; 34% to 28% R.C.).
- The proportions of both Protestants (30% to 36%) and Roman Catholics (31% to 35%) studying at **level 2** [GCSEs A*-C or equiv.] increased, as did the proportion of Roman Catholics studying at **level 1 & entry level** [GCSEs D-G or equiv.] (22% to 29%). The proportion of Protestant studying at **level 1 & entry level** remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-four).

⁴ See Appendix 1 for tables on enrolments in Further Education and Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

Community Background

Chart 7: Level of study at Further Education by Community Background



Source: Further Education Enrolment data, Department of Employment & Learning NI (DELNI)

Subject areas in Further Education

Overall, Protestant and Roman Catholic students chose to study similar subject areas in **Further Education**, with the same subject areas appearing in their top three choices for each of the years examined. The popularity of certain subject areas has changed over the years. **Applied Science** courses have decreased in popularity among both communities, while **Education** and **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** courses have increased in popularity (see Table 1).

In 2007/08:

- While the top three subjects were similar for both communities, Protestants (15%) were proportionately less likely than Roman Catholics (19%) to enrol on **Business, Management & Communications** courses.

Between 1998 and 2008:

- The proportion of students from both communities enrolling on **Applied Science**⁵ courses decreased (Protestant: 17% to 10%; Roman Catholics 19% to 8%).
- The proportion of students from both communities enrolling on **Education**⁵ courses increased substantially (Protestant: 6% to 19%; Roman Catholic: 9% to 19%).

⁵ Subject areas is only in Table 1 for the years it is one of the top 3 subject choices for Protestants / Roman Catholics.

Community Background

- The proportions of students from both communities enrolling on **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering**⁵ courses increased (Protestant: 12% to 15%; Roman Catholics: 10% to 15%).
- There was a greater increase in the proportion of Roman Catholic (13% to 19%) than Protestant (13% to 15%) enrolments on **Business, Management & Communications** courses.

Table 1: Further Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order⁶ for Protestant and Roman Catholic students

	2007/08		2004/05		2001/02		1998/99	
Protestant top three subject areas								
1st	Education	19%	ICT	16%	ICT	21%	Applied Science	17%
2nd	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	15%	Business, Management & Comms	15%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	14%	ICT	15%
3rd	Business, Management & Comms	15%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	14%	Business, Management & Comms	14%	Business, Management & Comms	13%
Roman Catholic top three subject areas								
1st	Business, Management & Comms	19%	Business, Management & Comms	17%	ICT	20%	Applied Science	19%
2nd	Education	19%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	15%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	13%	Business, Management & Comms	13%
3rd	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	15%	ICT	14%	Business, Management & Comms	13%	ICT	13%

Source: Further Education Enrolment data, DELNI

6. Participation in Higher Education

This section examines the participation of Protestants and Roman Catholics in Higher Education (Source: Department of Employment and Learning). Student **enrolments** in Higher Education, **level of study** and **subject choice** were examined.⁷

Enrolments in Higher Education

In 2007/08 a lower proportion of Protestant students (42%) than Roman Catholic students (58%) were enrolled in **Higher Education**.⁴ Since 1998/99 the proportion of Protestant and Roman Catholic enrolments in Higher Education has remained broadly unchanged.

⁶Where two subjects show the same percentage, the subject area placed higher in the table will have a greater proportion of enrolments when decimalised.

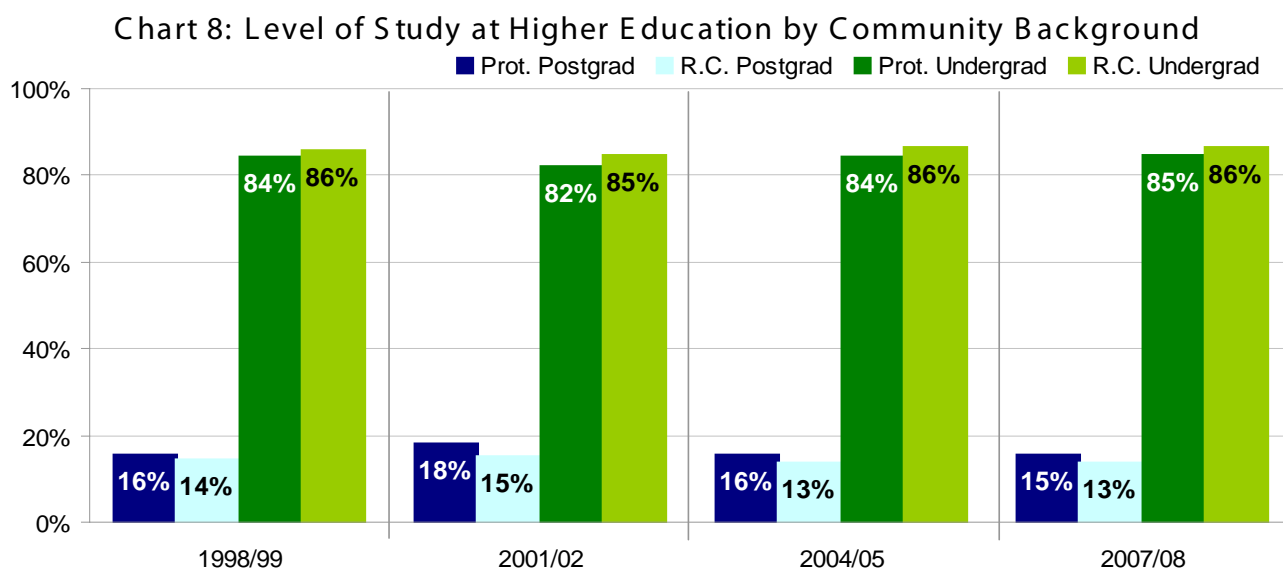
⁷ H.E. Data is rounded to the nearest 5 in accordance with HESA guidelines, and thus may not sum to 100%.

Community Background

Level of study in Higher Education

Overall, little difference exists between the proportions of Protestants and Roman Catholics enrolling at postgraduate and undergraduate level.

- In 2007/08, similar proportions of both communities enrolled at both postgraduate (around 13%) and undergraduate (around 85%) levels. This pattern has remained broadly unchanged since 1998/99 (Chart 8).



Source: Higher Education Enrolment data, Department of Employment & Learning NI (DELNI)

Subject areas in Higher Education

Overall, Protestant and Roman Catholic students chose to study similar subject areas.

Medical Sciences was the most frequent popular choice for both Protestant and Roman Catholics. The popularity of certain subject areas has changed over the years. **Medical Science** courses have increased in popularity among both communities, while **Maths, Computer Science & Engineering** courses have decreased in popularity (See Table 2).

In 2007/08:

- **Medical Sciences** was the most popular subject area for both Protestant (21%) and Roman Catholic (19%) students.
- Similar proportions of Protestant and Roman Catholics students enrolled in their shared top three subject areas - **Medical Sciences, Business and Communications** and **Social Studies & Education**.

Community Background

In 1998/99:

- **Business & Communications** was the most popular subject area for both Protestant (19%) and Roman Catholic (22%) students
- Protestants were more likely than Roman Catholics to enrol on **Biological, Physical & Agricultural Sciences**⁸ courses (17% vs. 13%), but were less likely to enrol on **Business & Communications** courses (19% vs. 22%).

Between 1998/99 and 2007/08:

- The proportion of Protestant students enrolling on **Medical Sciences** courses increased (15% to 21%) at a greater rate than for Roman Catholic students (14% to 19%).
- Until 2001/02, there was an increase in the proportions of Protestant (12% to 19%) and Roman Catholic (13% to 16%) students enrolling on **Social Studies & Education** courses. Since then, the proportion of Protestant students enrolling on **Social Studies & Education** courses decreased (19% to 15%), while the proportion of Roman Catholic students remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-six).

Table 2: Higher Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order⁶ for Protestant and Roman Catholic students

	2007/08		2004/05		2001/02		1998/99	
Protestant top three subject areas								
1st	Medical Sciences	21%	Medical Sciences	22%	Social Studies & Education	19%	Business & Communications	19%
2nd	Business & Communications	16%	Social Studies & Education	17%	Medical Sciences	18%	Maths, Comp. Sciences, Engin. & Technology	17%
3rd	Social Studies & Education	15%	Business & Communications	16%	Maths, Comp. Sciences, Engin. & Technology	17%	Biological, Physical & Agri. Sciences	17%
Roman Catholic top three subject areas								
1st	Medical Sciences	19%	Medical Sciences	20%	Business & Communications	19%	Business & Communications	22%
2nd	Business & Communications	18%	Business & Communications	18%	Maths, Comp. Sciences, Engin. & Technology	18%	Maths, Comp. Sciences, Engin. & Technology	17%
3rd	Social Studies & Education	16%	Social Studies & Education	17%	Social Studies & Education	17%	Medical Sciences	14%

Source: Higher Education Enrolment data, DELNI

⁸ Subject areas is only in Table 2 for the years it is one of the top 3 subject choices for Protestants / Roman Catholics.

Summary: Gender

2.1. Educational Attainment

2.1.1 **Amongst the Northern Ireland population**, in 2007/08 working age females were more likely than males to be qualified to **degree or above**. Working age males were more likely than females to have left the education system with **no qualifications**.

- A greater proportion of working age males than females had A-levels as their highest qualification. This suggests that more working age males exit the education system at this point. However, a greater proportion of females than males left school with **2 or more A-levels A-E**, and have historically done so.

2.1.2 Over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08 the gap in educational attainment of males and females has widened.

- Amongst the Northern Ireland population the proportion of economically active males holding a **degree or above** has increased at a lower rate than for females. Further, the proportion of economically active and inactive males holding **no qualifications** has remained broadly unchanged, while the proportion of females has decreased.
- The proportion of both males and females **leaving school with 2 or more A-levels A-E** has increased substantially (28% to 38% males, 42% to 56% females). However, in parallel the gap in achievement has also widened (from 14% to 18%) with females outperforming males

2.2 Educational Destinations

2.2.1 In 2007/08 males were less likely than females to continue on to third level education.

- Amongst school leavers, males were less likely to say they **intended** going on to Higher Education than females. Similar proportions of males and females intended to progress to Further Education.
- In terms of **actual enrolments**, a slightly lower proportion of males than females were enrolled in Further Education, and a considerably lower proportion of males than females were enrolled in **Higher Education**.

2.2.2 Between 1998/99 and 2007/08, the gap in the proportion of males and females enrolled in **Further Education** has decreased, reflecting increased male participation. In **Higher Education**, males have consistently had lower participation than females, with the actual proportions of both genders enrolled remaining unchanged over this ten year period.

2.2.3 Between 1998/99 and 2007/08, there has been little change in the patterns of subject choice for males and females in **Further and Higher Education**, with both groups opting to study different subject areas in both sectors.

- In Further Education, **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** has remained almost exclusively an area of preference for males. In contrast, **Health & Social Care** courses have remained almost exclusively female.
- In Higher Education, **Maths, Computer Science & Technology** was the most popular subject area for males but had low participation rates of females. In comparison, **Medical Sciences** was the most popular subject area for females, while lower levels of males opted for this area.

1. Highest Education Attainment of Economically Active Adults

This section presents evidence of the highest educational attainment of economically active Males and Females (Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)⁹.

In 2007/08 more economically active females than economically active males were qualified to **degree level or above**. Males were more likely than females to hold **no qualifications** (see Chart 9-10).

- In 2007/2008, economically active males were less likely than females to hold a **degree or above** (21% males; 27% females) or **GCSEs A*-C** (16% males; 24% females) as their highest level of educational attainment.
- Economically active males were more likely than economically active females to have **A-levels** (30% males; 20% females) as their highest qualification
- A greater proportion of economically active males (19%) than females (11%) have **no qualifications**.

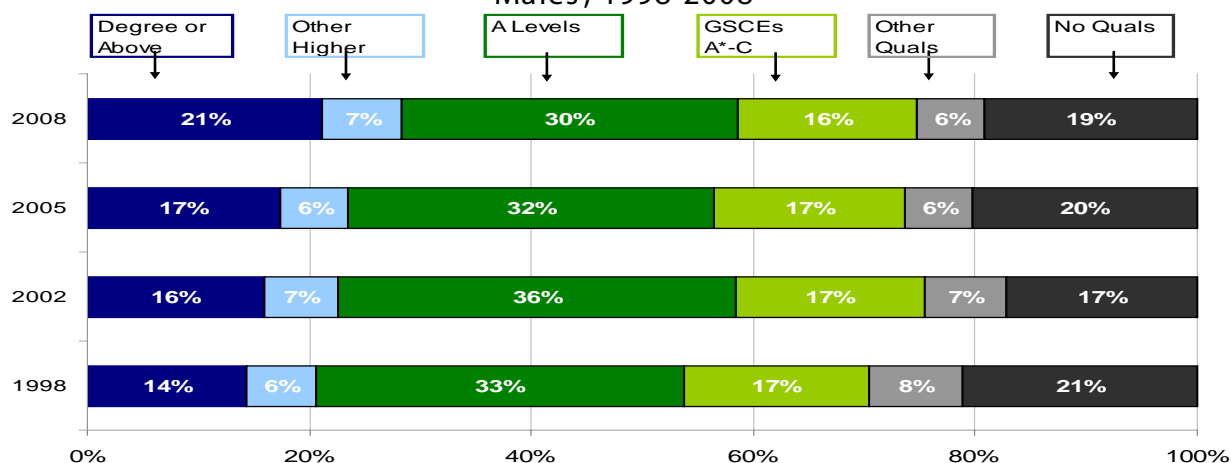
Between 1998 and 2008, the gap between the attainment of economically active males and females has widened (see Chart 9-10).

- The proportion of economically active males holding a **degree or above** has increased (14% to 21% males), although at a slower rate than for females (15% to 27% females).
- The proportion of economically active males with **A-levels** as their highest qualification has fluctuated, but remained broadly unchanged (around one in three), while the proportion of economically active females with A-levels as their highest qualification has increased slightly (16% to 20%).
- The proportion of economically active males with **no qualifications** has fluctuated but remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-five) while the proportion of females has decreased (17% to 11%).

⁹ Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

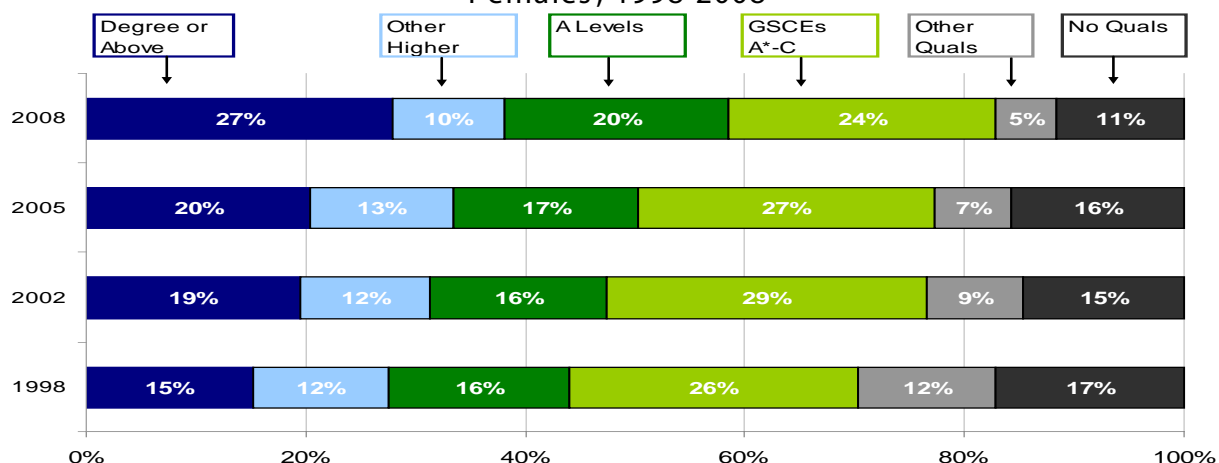
Gender

Chart 9: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age Males, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

Chart 10: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age Females, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

2. Highest Education Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults

This section presents evidence of the highest educational attainment of economically inactive Males and Females (Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)¹⁰.

Overall, the highest educational attainment of economically inactive adults is lower than economically active adults.

¹⁰ Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

Gender

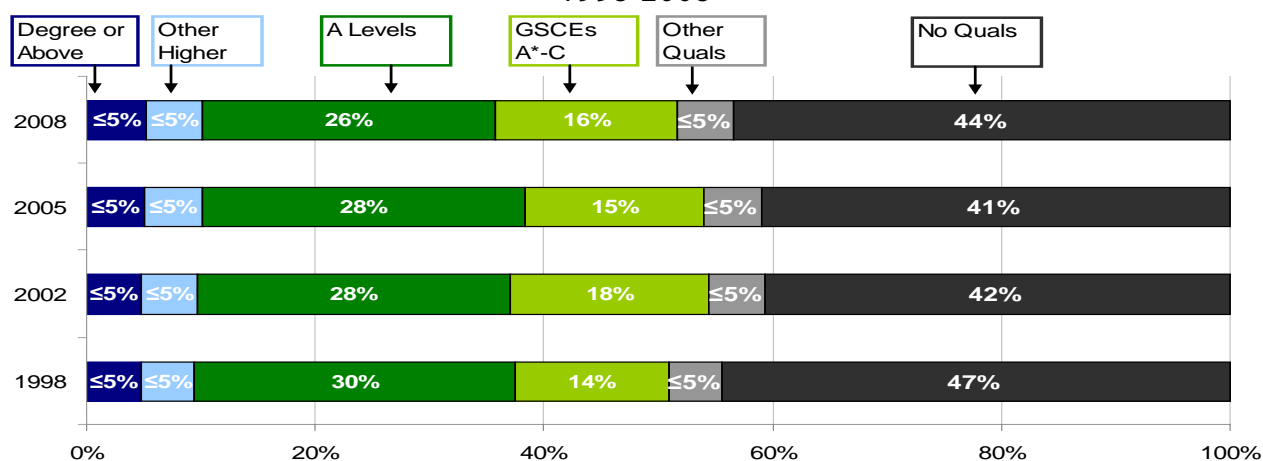
In 2007/08 differences in the highest educational attainment of **economically inactive** males and females were similar to that observed for **economically active** males and females (see Chart 11-12).

- In 2007/08, females were more likely than males to hold **degree or above** qualifications. Additionally, a greater proportion of males (26%) than females (16%) held **A-levels** as their highest level of educational attainment.
- In 2007/08 economically inactive males were more likely to hold **no qualifications** (44%) than economically inactive females (33%).

Differences in the highest educational attainment of economically inactive males and females have widened between 1998 and 2008 (see Chart 11-12).

- Notably, the proportion of females with **no qualifications** has decreased (47% to 33%). There has been a corresponding increase in the proportion of females with qualifications, particularly at **GCSE** level (22% to 29%).
- Overall, male attainment trends have remained relatively unchanged. In contrast to the female sample, little improvement has occurred in the proportion with **no qualifications**, and only a small increase has occurred in the proportion with **GCSEs A*-C** (14% to 16%).

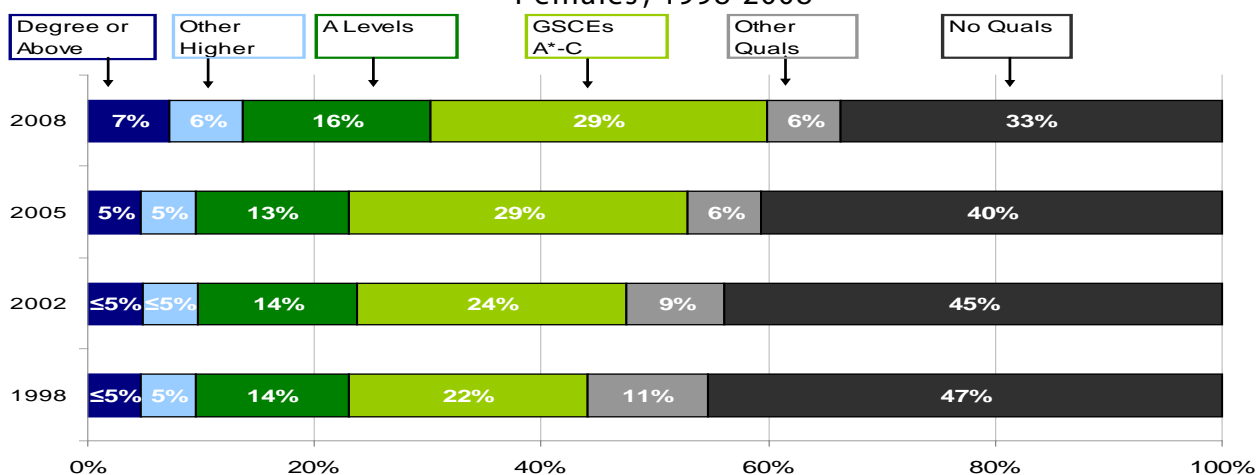
Chart 11: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Males, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

Gender

Chart 12: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age Females, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

3. Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers

Using data from the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education), this section examines the **highest educational attainment** of all males and female school leavers in Northern Ireland.

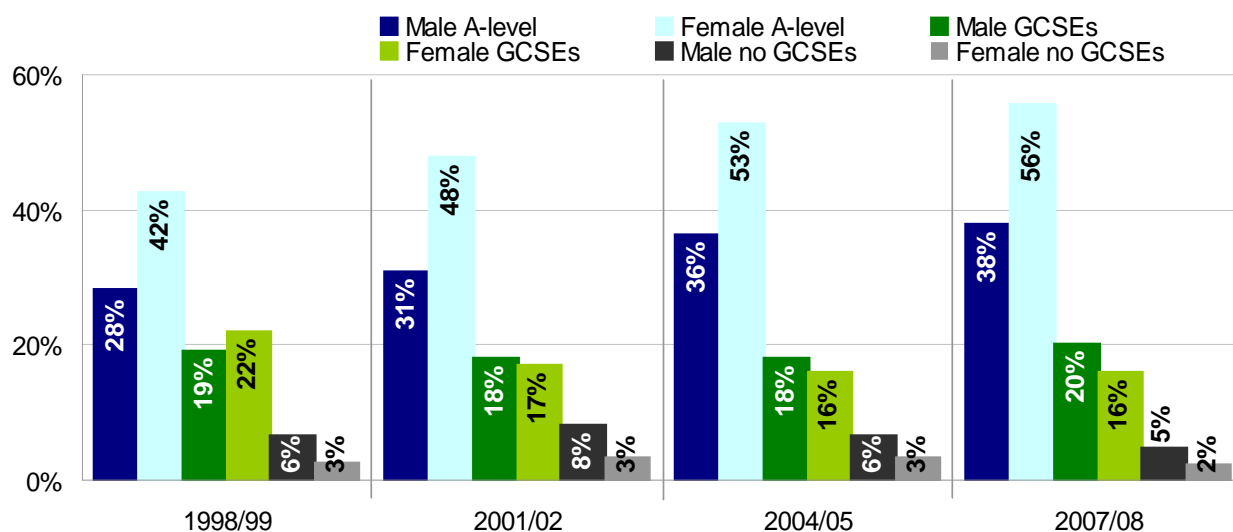
In 2007/08, females were substantially more likely than males to leave school with A-levels as their highest qualification (see Chart 13).

- In 2007/08 females were substantially more likely (56%) than males (38%) to leave school with **2 or more A-levels A-E**.
- Males were slightly more likely than females to leave school with **5 or more GCSEs A*-C** as their highest qualification (20% males, 16% females) or with no GCSEs (5% males, 2% females).

Between 1998 and 2008, differences in the highest educational attainment for male and female school leavers have widened (see Chart 13).

- The proportion of both males and females leaving school with **2 or more A-levels A-E** has increased substantially (28% to 38% males, 42% to 56% females). In parallel, the gap in achievement has also widened (14 percentage points to 18 percentage points), with females outperforming males.

Chart 13: School leavers' Highest Education Attainments by Gender



Source: School Leavers Survey, DENI

4. Educational Destinations of School Leavers

Using data from the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education), this section examines the intended **educational destinations** of all male and female school leavers in Northern Ireland.

In 2007/2008 similar proportions of males and females intended to progress to **Further Education**, while males were less likely to say that they were going on to **Higher Education** than females (see Chart 14).

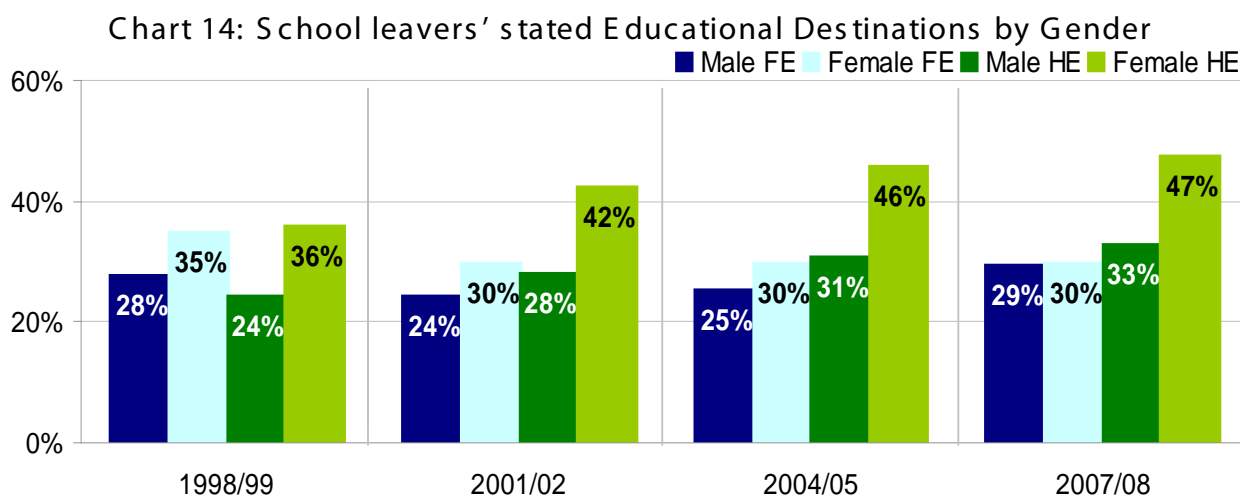
- In 2007/08 similar proportions of both males (29%) and females (30%) said they were going on to **Further Education**.
- Males (33%) were substantially less likely than females (47%) to say they were going on to **Higher Education**.

Between 1998 and 2008, the proportion of both male and female school leavers who say they were going on to **Higher Education** increased substantially, while the proportion of females who say they were going on to **Further Education** decreased (see Chart 14).

- Since 1998/99 the proportions of males who say they are going on to **Further Education** has fluctuated but remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-four), while the proportion of females has decreased (35% to 30%). Thus, the difference between the two groups has all but closed (7 percentage points to 1 percentage point).

Gender

- The proportions of both males and females who say they are going on to **Higher Education** has increased (24% to 33%; 36% to 47%). However, the difference between the two groups has widened slightly (12 percentage points to 14 percentage points).



Source: School Leavers Survey, DENI

5. Participation in Further Education

This section examines the actual participation of males and females in Further Education (Source: Department for Employment and Learning). Student **enrolments** in Further Education, **level of study** and **subject choice** were examined.

Enrolments in Further Education

Over the ten year period examined, males consistency accounted for a lower proportion of **enrolments** than females.¹¹ However, the proportion of enrolments that males accounted for **increased** over the ten years, suggesting that males are becoming increasingly more likely to participate in **Further Education**.

- In 2007/08, a lower proportion of males (48%) than females (52%) were enrolled in **Further Education**.
- Between 1998/99 and 2007/08, the proportion of enrolments that males account for has increased (39% to 48%). Concurrently, the proportion that females account for has decreased (61% to 52%). Thus, the gap between the proportion of males and females

¹¹ See Appendix 1 for tables on enrolments in Further Education and Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

Gender

enrolled in **Further Education** has decreased considerably (22 percentage points to 4 percentage points).

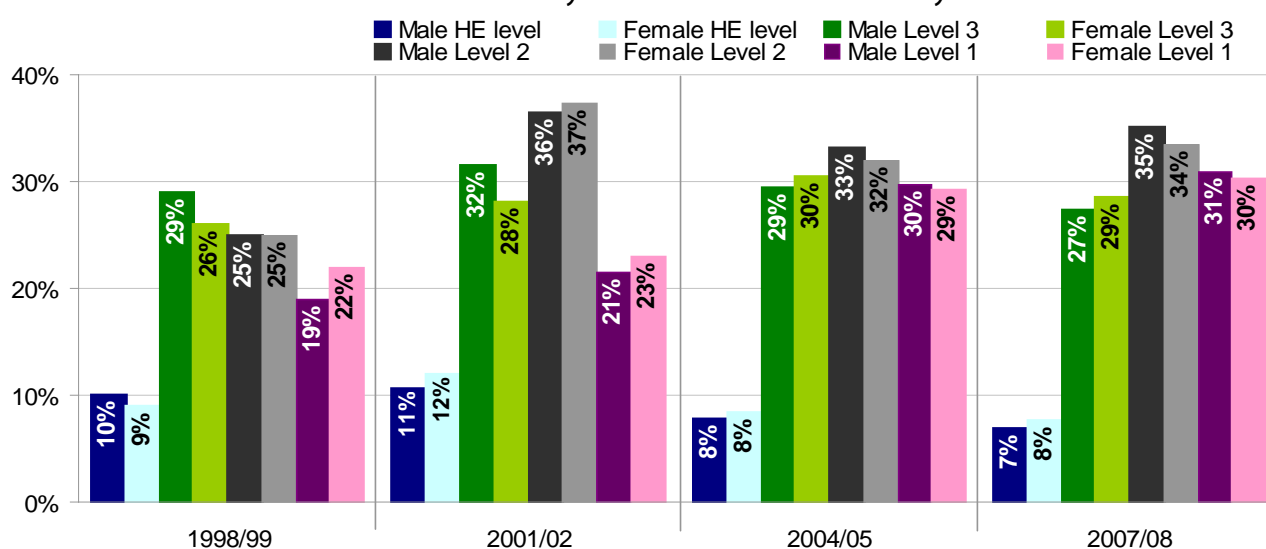
Level of study in Further Education

In 2007/2008, similar proportions of males and females were enrolled at each of the four different levels of study in **Further Education** (Chart 15).

Over the period 1998/99 to 2007/08, there has been an increase in the proportion of male and female students studying at the two **lowest levels of study** in **Further Education**. Notably, changes in enrolment patterns at these **levels of study** have been less marked for females than for males.

- The proportion of students studying at **Level 1 & entry** (GCSEs D-G or equiv.) and **Level 2** [GCSEs A*-C or equiv.] has increased. However, this increase has been more marked for males (19% to 31% Level 1; 25% to 35% Level 2) than for females (22% to 30% Level 1; 25% to 34% Level 2).
- Over the ten year period, the proportions of male and female students studying at both **Level 3** [A-levels or equiv.] and **Higher Education Level** [Cert. HE & above] fluctuated but overall showed little or no change (see Chart 15).

Chart 15: Level of study at Further Education by Gender



Source: Further Education Enrolment data, DELNI

Subject areas in Further Education

Overall males and females chose to study different subject areas, with little overlap in their respective top three subjects. **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** was the most popular subject area for males in each of the years, but did not feature in the top three subject areas for females. Conversely, **Health & Social Care** was a frequent popular choice for females, but did not feature in the top three subject areas for males (see Table 3). The popularity of certain subject areas has changed over the years. **Applied Science** and **ICT** courses have reduced in popularity among both males and females, while **Business, Management & Communications** courses have increased in popularity.

In 2007/08:

- **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** (27%) was the most popular subject area for males, while **Business, Management & Communications** (21%) was the most popular subject areas for females.
- Males were more likely than females to study **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering**¹² (27% males; 1% females) and **Education** (24% males; 16% females), but were less likely than females to enrol on **Business, Management & Communications** courses (16% males; 21% females) or **Health & Social Care** courses¹² (3% males, 14% females).

In 1998/99:

- **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** (25%) was the most popular subject area for males, while **Applied Science** (18%) was the most popular subject areas for females.
- Males were more likely than females to enrol on **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** courses (25% males; 1% females), but less likely to enrol on **Health & Social Care** courses (2% males; 13% females).

Since 1998/99:

- The proportion of students enrolling on **Business, Management & Communications**¹² courses has increased. However, this increase been more marked for females (14% to 21%) than for males (12% to 16%).

¹² Subject areas is only in Table 3 for the years it is one of the top 3 subject choices for males / females.

Gender

- The proportion of students enrolling on **Applied Sciences**¹² courses has decreased. However, this decrease been more marked for males (18% to 7%) than for females (18% to 10%).
- **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** has remained almost exclusively an area of preference for males (around 1% females). In contrast, **Health & Social Care** courses have remained almost exclusively female (around 2% males).

Table 3: Further Education **Subject Area Enrolments in rank order**¹³ for Male and Female students

	2007/08		2004/05		2001/02		1998/99	
Male top three subject areas								
1st	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	27%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	30%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	29%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	25%
2nd	Education	24%	Business, Management & Comms	16%	ICT	20%	Applied Science	18%
3rd	Business, Management & Comms	16%	ICT	14%	Business, Management & Comms	13%	ICT	14%
Female top three subject areas								
1st	Business, Management & Comms	21%	Business, Management & Comms	18%	ICT	22%	Applied Science	18%
2nd	Education	16%	ICT	15%	Business, Management & Comms	15%	ICT	15%
3rd	Health & Social Care	14%	Health & Social Care	15%	Health & Social Care	14%	Business, Management & Comms	14%

Source: Further Education Enrolment data, DELNI

6. Participation in Higher Education

This section examines the actual participation rates of males and females in Higher Education (Source: Department for Employment and Learning). Student **enrolments** in Higher Education, **level of study** and **subject choice** were examined.¹⁴

Enrolments in Higher Education

Over the ten year period examined, males consistently accounted for a lower proportion of **enrolments** than females. This suggests that males are less likely to participate in **Higher Education** than females.¹¹

¹³Where two subjects show the same percentage, the subject area placed higher in the table will have a greater proportion of enrolments when decimalised.

¹⁴ H.E. Data is rounded to the nearest 5 in accordance with HESA guidelines, and thus may not sum to 100%.

Gender

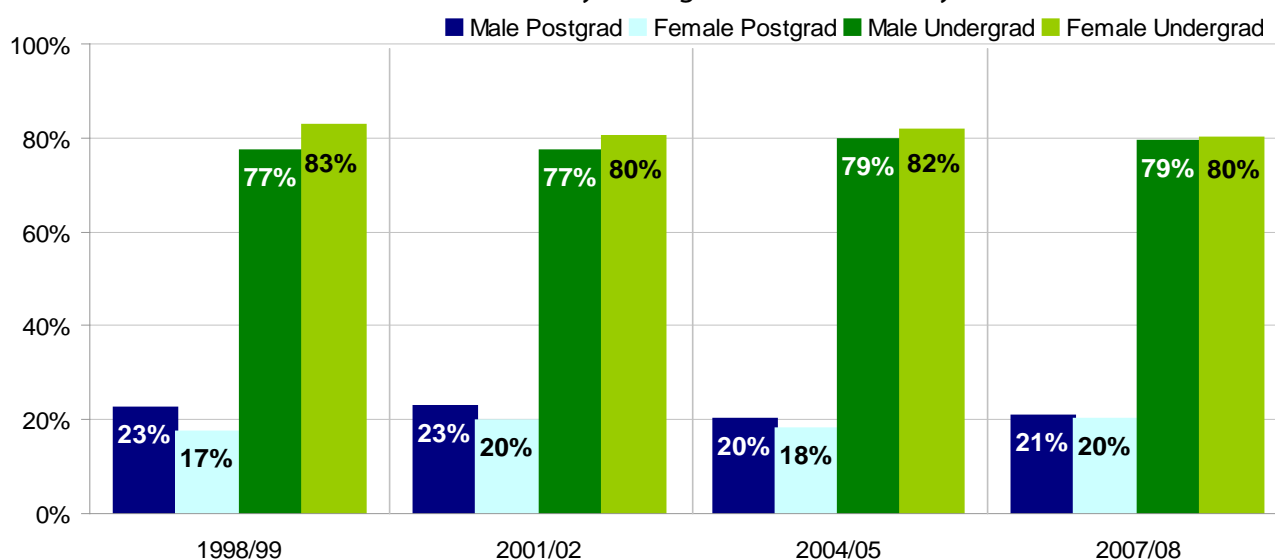
- In 2007/08, a greater proportion of those enrolled in Higher Education were female (60%) than male (40%).
- Since 1998/99 the proportion of enrolments of males and females in higher education has remained broadly unchanged (40% males; 60% females).

Level of study in Higher Education

Over the ten year period, the gap between the proportions of male and female students' enrolling at **postgraduate** and **undergraduate** all but **closed**. There is now close to equal participation of males and females at both levels of study. (see Chart 16).

- In 2007/08, similar proportions of males and females enrolled at **postgraduate** (21% vs. 20%) and **undergraduate** (79% vs. 80%) level.
- In 1998/99, males were more likely to be enrolled at postgraduate level than females (23% vs. 17%), and were less likely to be enrolled at undergraduate level (77% vs. 83%).

Chart 16: Level of study at Higher Education by Gender



Source: Higher Education Enrolment data, DELNI

Subject areas in Higher Education

Overall, males and females chose to study different subject areas in **Higher Education**, with little overlap in their respective top three subjects. **Maths, Computer Science & Technology** was the most popular subject area for males in each of the years, but did not feature in the top three subject areas for females. Conversely, **Medical Sciences** was the most popular subject choice for females in each of the years, but did not feature in the top three subject

Gender

areas for males. There was little variation in males' and females' top three subject areas over the years (see Table 4).

In 2007/08:

- **Maths, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology** (23%) was the most popular subject area for males, while **Medical Sciences** (28%) was the most popular subject area for females.
- Males were more likely than females to study **Maths, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology**¹⁵ (23% male, 5% females), but were less likely to study **Medical Sciences**¹⁵ (10% male, 28% female).

In 1998/99 the subject areas studied by males and females in **Higher Education** were the same as those observed in 2007/08 (see Table 4).

Between 1998/99 and 2007/08 the proportions of either gender enrolling on Maths, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology Business & Communications, Arts & Humanities and Social Studies & Education courses (see Table 4) remained broadly similar. Notably, the proportion of females enrolling in Medical Sciences has increased overall (23% to 28%).

Table 4: Higher Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order¹³ for Male and Female Students

	2007/08		2004/05		2001/02		1998/99	
Male top three subject areas								
1st	Maths, Comp. Science, Engin. & Technology	23%	Maths, Comp. Science, Engin. & Technology	26%	Maths, Comp. Science, Engin. & Technology	26%	Maths, Comp. Science, Engin. & Technology	24%
2nd	Business & Communications	17%	Business & Communications	16%	Business & Communications	14%	Business & Communications	16%
3rd	Arts & Humanities	12%	Arts & Humanities	15%	Arts & Humanities	13%	Arts & Humanities	12%
Female top three subject areas								
1st	Medical Sciences	28%	Medical Sciences	30%	Medical Sciences	25%	Medical Sciences	23%
2nd	Social Studies & Education	18%	Social Studies & Education	19%	Social Studies & Education	18%	Social Studies & Education	19%
3rd	Business & Communications	16%	Arts & Humanities	16%	Business & Communications	15%	Business & Communications	16%

Source: Higher Education Enrolment data, DELNI

¹⁵ Subject area is only in Table 4 for the years it is one of the top 3 subject choices for males / females.

Summary: Disability

3.1 Educational Attainment

3.1.1 Amongst the Northern Ireland population, in 2008 economically active and inactive people with a declared disability had lower overall levels of attainment, and were more likely to hold **no qualifications**, than those without a declared disability

3.1.2 Overall, between 1998 and 2008 the **gap** between the educational attainment of working age people with and without a declared disability has **widened**. However there have been changes in the attainment levels of people with a declared disability, particularly for those economically active.

- The proportion of economically active people with a declared disability holding a **degree and above** has increased, but at a lower rate than for those without a declared disability.
- The proportion of economically active people with a declared disability with **no qualifications** has fluctuated but overall decreased (34% to 25%). The proportion of economically active without a declared disability and no qualifications has remained broadly unchanged (around 15 to 16%).
- The proportion of economically inactive people with a declared disability holding no qualifications has remained broadly unchanged, while the proportion of those without a declared disability has decreased.

3.2 Educational Destinations

3.2.1 Overall, people with a declared disability were less likely to enrol in **Further** and **Higher Education** than those without a declared disability.

3.2.2 Since 1998/99, there has been little change in the proportions of those with and without a declared disability enrolling in **Further Education** (around 4%), while the proportion of people with a declared disability enrolling in **Higher Education** has increased (from 4% to 7% in 2007/08).

3.2.3 Overall, in 2007/08, people with a declared disability were more likely to be enrolled at lower levels of study in **third level education** than those without a declared disability.

- People with a declared disability were considerably more likely to be enrolled at **level 1 & entry level** and less likely to be enrolled at every other level of **Further Education** than those without a declared disability.
- People with a declared disability were slightly more likely to be enrolled at undergraduate level of **Higher Education** than those without a declared disability.

3.2.4 Overall, people with and without a declared disability chose to study relatively different subject areas in **Further Education**, but similar subject areas in **Higher Education**. For example, in Further Education colleges, **Education** was the most popular subject area for people **with** a declared disability in each of the years, but only featured once in the top three subject areas for those **without** a declared disability, in 2007/08. In Higher Education, Arts and Humanities has been the most frequent popular subject area for people with a disability while Medical Sciences has been the most frequent popular subject area for people without a disability.

1. Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Adults

This section presents evidence of the highest educational attainment of economically active people with and without a declared disability (Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)¹⁶.

Economically active adults with a declared disability had lower overall levels of attainment and were more likely to hold **no qualifications** than those **without** a declared disability (see Chart 17 & 18).

- In 2008, a lower proportion of economically active adults with a declared disability held a **degree or above (14%)** compared to those without a declared disability (25%).
- In 2007/08, a higher proportion of people with a declared disability had **no qualifications (25%)** compared to those without a declared disability (15%).

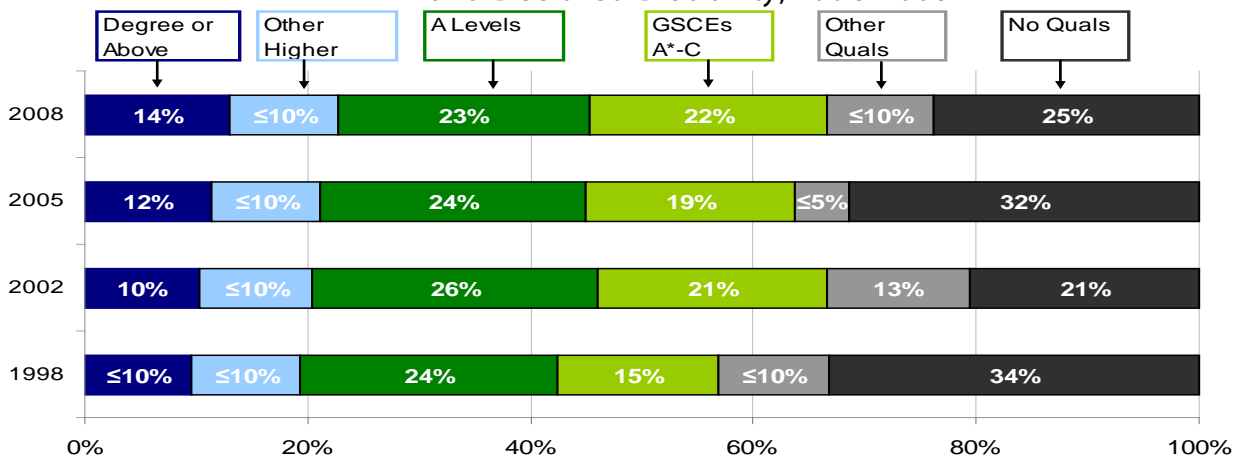
Since 1998, the difference in the proportions of economically active adults with and without a declared disability holding **third-level** qualifications has increased. Conversely, the difference in the proportion of economically active adults with and without a declared disability holding **GCSEs A*-C** or **no qualifications** has decreased slightly (see Chart 17-18).

- Whilst the proportion of economically active adults holding a **degree or above** has increased, this increase has been less marked for economically active adults **with** a declared disability (10% to 14%) compared to among those **without** a declared disability (15% to 25%).
- The proportion of people **with** a declared disability with **GCSEs A*-C** has increased (15% to 22%), while the proportion of people **without** a declared disability holding **GCSEs A*-C** fluctuated but overall remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-five).
- The proportion of people **with** a declared disability with **no qualifications** has fluctuated but overall has decreased (34% to 25%), while the proportion of people **without** a declared disability holding no qualifications has remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-seven).

¹⁶ Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

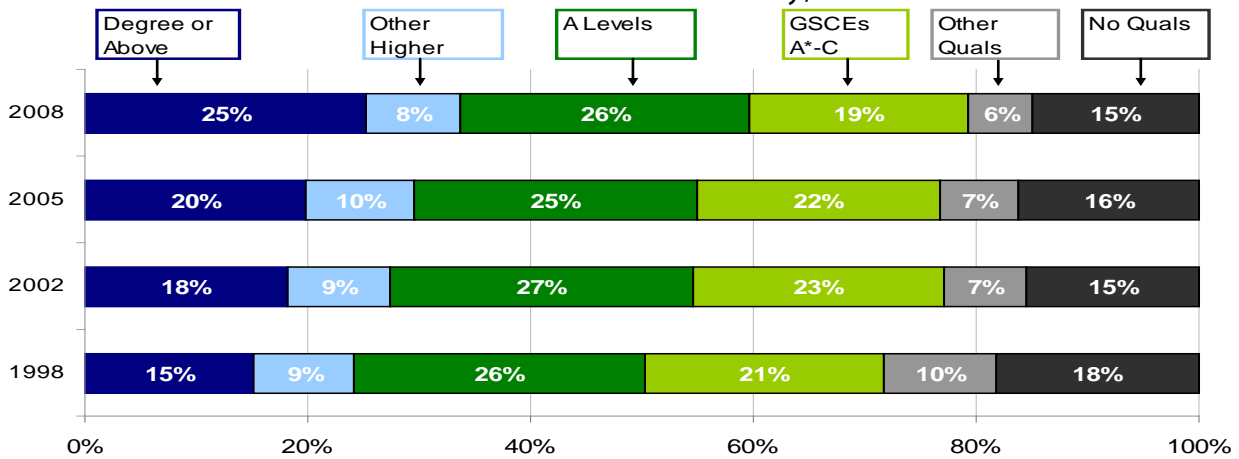
Disability

Chart 17: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age People with a Declared Disability, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

Chart 18: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Active Working Age People without a Declared Disability, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

2. Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults

This section presents evidence of the highest educational attainment of economically inactive people with and without a declared disability (Source: Labour Force Survey, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)¹⁷.

Economically inactive adults **with** a declared disability were less likely than economically inactive adults **without** a declared disability to hold any **educational qualification**, but were more likely to hold **no qualifications** (see Charts 19 & 20).

¹⁷ Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

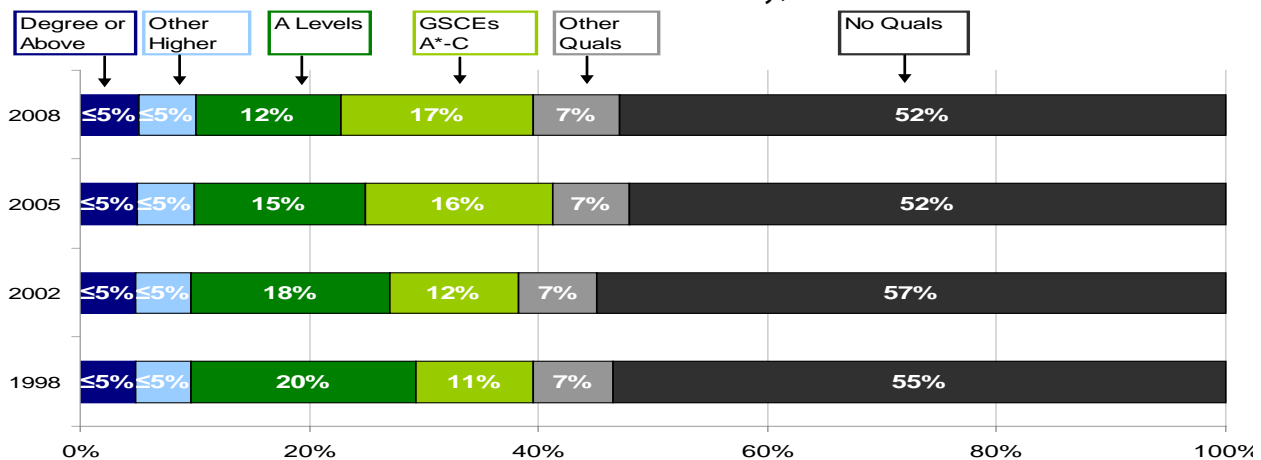
Disability

- In 2008, a lower proportion of economically inactive people with a declared disability held **A-levels** (12%) compared to those without a declared disability (25%). A similar pattern was evident for **GCSEs A*-C** (17% disabled, 28% non-disabled).
- A greater proportion of economically inactive people with a declared disability held **no qualifications** (52%) than those without a declared disability (27%).

Since 1998, the gap between the proportions of economically inactive people with and without a declared disability holding **A-Levels** and **no qualifications** as their highest level of educational attainment has increased (see Charts 19 & 20).

- The proportion of people with a declared disability who hold **A-levels** as their highest qualifications decreased (20% to 12%), while the proportion of those without a disability increased (19% to 25%).
- The proportion of people with a declared disability with **no qualifications** fluctuated slightly but overall remained broadly unchanged (more than one-in-two), whilst the proportion of people without a declared disability has decreased greatly (40% to 27%).
- Additionally, the proportion of people with a declared disability holding **GCSEs A*-C** as their highest qualification has increased (11% to 17%), while the proportion of people without a declared disability achieving **GCSEs** fluctuated but overall remained similar (around one-in-three).

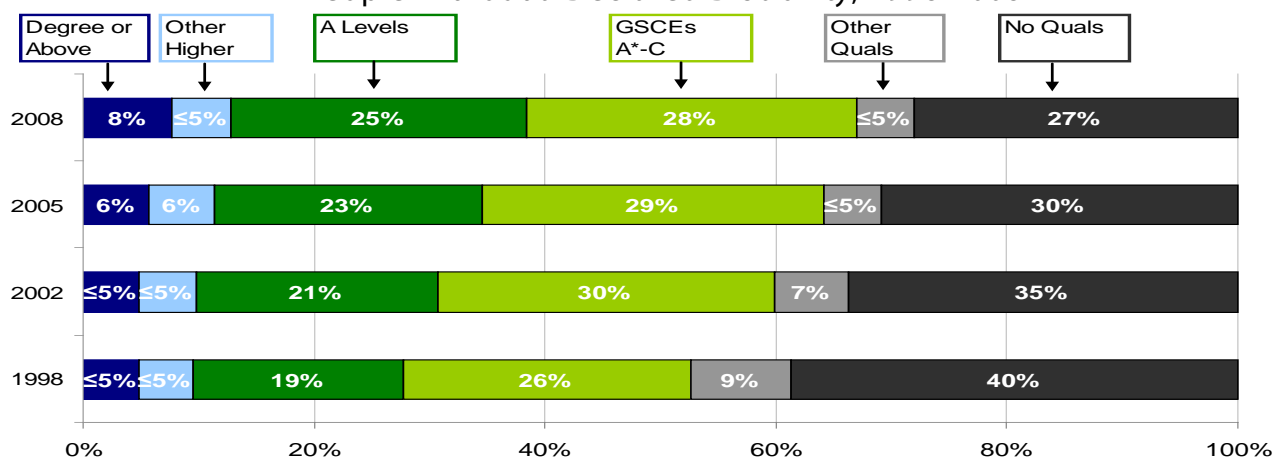
Chart 19: Highest Educational Attainment of Economically Inactive Working Age People with a Declared Disability, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

Disability

Chart 20: Highest Educational Attainment of the Economically Inactive Working Age People without a Declared Disability, 1998-2008



Source: Labour Force Survey, DETINI

3. Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers

School Leavers data on children with a declared disability is currently not published as declaration of disability is very low. Data on children with a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) is available from the Department of Education. This information is not presented in this report as not all children with disabilities have statements of SEN.

4. Educational Destinations of School Leavers

School Leavers data on children with a declared disability is currently not published as declaration of disability is very low. Data on children with a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) is available from the Department of Education. This information is not presented in this report as not all children with disabilities have statements of SEN.

5. Participation in Further Education

This section examines the participation of people with and without a declared disability in Further Education (Source: Department for Employment and Learning). Student **enrolments** in Further Education, **level of study** and **subject choice** were examined.

Enrolments in Further Education

Overall, people with a declared disability were much less likely to enrol in **Further Education** than those without a declared disability.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Appendix 1 for tables on enrolments in Further Education and Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

Disability

- In 2007/08, people with a declared disability accounted for a substantially lower proportion of enrolments (4%) than those without a declared disability (96%).
- Between 1998 and 2008 there has been little change in the proportions of people with and without a declared disability enrolling in **Further Education**.

Level of study in Further Education

Overall, in 2007/08, people with a declared disability were substantially more likely to be enrolled at **level 1 & entry level** and less likely to be enrolled at every other level of **Further Education** than people without a declared disability (Chart 21).

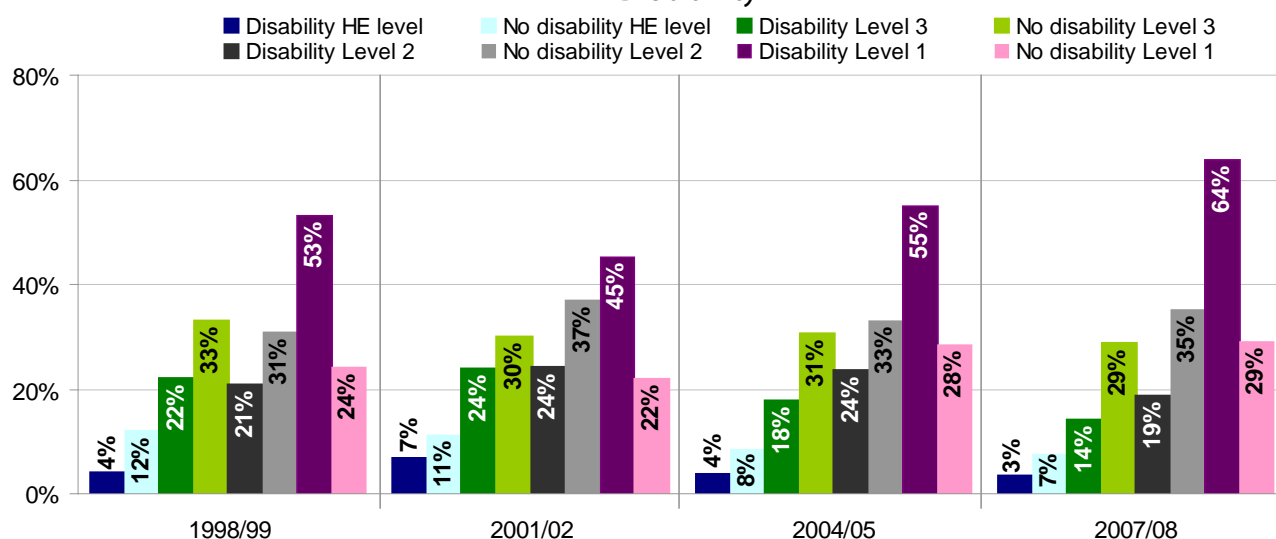
- A higher proportion of people with a declared disability (64%) were enrolled at **level 1 & entry level** [GCSEs D-G or equiv.] than people without a declared disability (29%).
- A lower proportion of people **with a declared disability** were enrolled at **Higher Education level** (3%) [Cert HE or above] than those **without a declared disability** (7%), **level 3** [A-levels or equiv.] (14%, 29%) and **level 2** [GCSEs A*-C or equiv.] (19%, 35%).

Overall, between 1998 and 2008, the difference in the proportion of people with and without a declared disability enrolled in **Levels 1 to 3 of Further Education** has widened (See Chart 21).

- The proportion of people with a declared disability enrolling at **Higher Education level** [Cert HE or above] fluctuated slightly but overall remained low ($\leq 7\%$), while the proportion of people without a declared disability enrolling has decreased (12% to 7%). Thus, the gap between the two groups has decreased.
- In contrast, while the proportion of people with a declared disability enrolling at **level 2** [GCSEs A*-C or equiv.] also remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-five), the proportion of people without a declared disability enrolling has increased (31% to 35%).
- The **decrease** in the proportion of people enrolling at **level 3** [A-levels or equiv.] has been more marked for people **with** a declared disability (22% to 14%) than people **without** a declared disability (33% to 29%). Conversely, the **increase** in the proportion of people enrolling at **level 1 & entry** [GCSEs D-G or equiv.] has been more marked for those with, rather than without, a declared disability (53% to 64% vs. 24% to 29%).

Disability

Chart 21: Level of study at Further Education by Declared Disability / No Declared Disability



Source: Further Education Enrolment data, DELNI

Subject areas in Further Education

Overall, people with and without a declared disability chose to study different subject areas (see Table 5). **Education** was the most popular subject area for people **with** a declared disability in each of the years, but only featured once in the top three subject areas for those **without** a declared disability, in 2007/08. Conversely, **Business, Management and Communications** was the most frequent top subject area for those **without a declared disability**, but only featured once in the top three subject areas for those **with** a declared disability, in 2004/05. The popularity of certain subject areas has changed over the years. **Applied Science** courses have reduced in popularity among people with and without a declared disability. **Business, Management and Communications** courses have increased in popularity among students without a declared disability.

In 2007/08:

- **Education** (40%) was the most popular subject area for people with a declared disability, while **Business, Management and Communications** (19%) was the most popular subject area for people without a declared disability.
- People with a declared disability were more likely than those without a declared disability to enrol on **Education** courses (40% vs. 19%) and **Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality**¹⁹ courses (10% vs. 7%).

¹⁹ Subject area is only in Table 5 for the years it is one of the top 3 subject choices of those with / without a disability.

Disability

- People with a declared disability were much less likely than those without a declared disability to enrol on **Business, Management & Communications**¹⁹ courses (8% ; 19%) and **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering**¹⁹ courses (5%; 14%).

In 1998/99:

- **Education** (30%), was the most popular subject area for people with a declared disability, while **Applied Science** (18%) was the most popular subject area for people without a declared disability.
- In 1998/99 those with a declared disability were substantially more likely than those without a declared disability to enrol on **Education**¹⁹ courses (30% vs. 8%), but were less likely to enrol on **Business, Management & Communications** courses (8% vs. 14%) and **ICT** courses (12% vs. 15%).

Between 1998 and 2008:

- The proportions of those with a declared disability (30% to 40%) and without a declared disability (8% to 19%) enrolling on **Education** courses increased.
- The proportion of those with a declared disability enrolling on **ICT** courses remained broadly unchanged (around one-in-eight), while the proportion of those without a declared disability fluctuated but overall has decreased (15% to 9%).
- The proportion of those with a declared disability enrolling on **Business, Management & Communications** courses remained broadly unchanged (around 7%), while the proportion of those without a declared disability increased (14% to 19%).
- The proportion of those with a declared disability enrolling **Construction, Built Environment & Engineering** courses remained broadly unchanged (around 5%), while the proportion of those without a declared disability increased (10% to 14%).

Disability

Table 5: Further Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order²⁰ for students with / without a Declared Disability

	2007/08		2004/05		2001/02		1998/99	
Those with a declared disability top three subject areas								
1st	Education	40%	Education	32%	Education	28%	Education	30%
2nd	ICT	11%	ICT	13%	Applied Science	13%	Applied Science	16%
3rd	Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality	10%	Business, Management & Comms	10%	ICT	12%	ICT	12%
Those without a declared disability top three subject areas								
1st	Business, Management & Comms	19%	Business, Management & Comms	18%	ICT	22%	Applied Science	18%
2nd	Education	19%	ICT	15%	Business, Management & Comms	14%	ICT	15%
3rd	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	14%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	14%	Construction, Built Environ. & Engineering	13%	Business, Management & Comms	14%

Source: Further Education Enrolment data, DELNI

6. Participation in Higher Education

This section examines the participation of people with and without a declared disability in Higher Education (Source: Department for Employment and Learning). Student **enrolments** in Higher Education, **level of study** and **subject choices** were examined.²¹

Enrolments in Higher Education

Overall, people with a declared disability were much less likely to enrol in **Higher Education** than those without a declared disability.¹⁸

- In 2007/08 people with a declared disability accounted for a substantially lower proportion of enrolments (7%) than those without a declared disability (93%).
- Since 1998, an increase has occurred in the proportions of people with a declared disability enrolling in **Higher Education** (4% to 7%).

²⁰Where two subjects show the same percentage, the subject area placed higher in the table will have a greater proportion of enrolments when decimalised.

²¹H.E. Data is rounded to the nearest 5 in accordance with HESA guidelines, and thus may not sum to 100%.

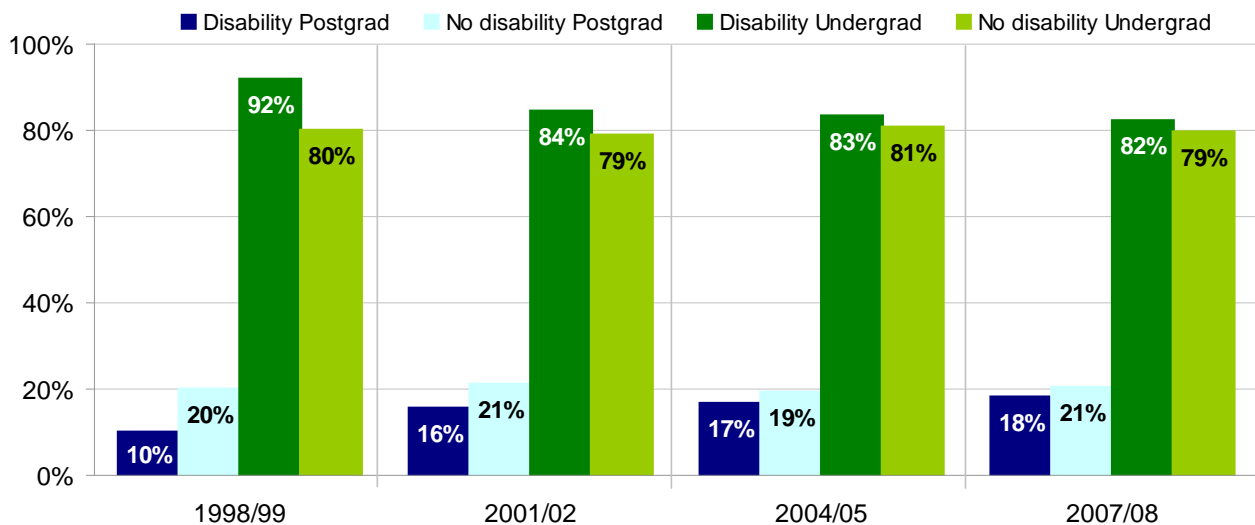
Disability

Level of study in Higher Education

People **with** a declared disability were more likely to be studying at **undergraduate level** and less likely to be studying at **postgraduate level** than people **without** a declared disability (see Chart 22).

- In 2007/08 people **with** a declared disability (82%) were more likely to enrol at **undergraduate level** than people **without a declared disability** (79%), and in parallel, were less likely to enrol at postgraduate level (18% vs. 21%).
- In 1998/99, as in 2007/08, people **with** a declared disability (92%) were more likely to enrol at **undergraduate level** than people **without** a declared disability (80%). Concurrently, people **with** a declared disability were less likely to enrol at postgraduate level (10% vs. 20%).
- Between 1998 and 2008, the proportion of people **with** a declared disability enrolling at postgraduate level increased considerably (10% to 18%), while the proportion of people **without** a declared disability remained broadly unchanged (around 20%).

Chart 22: Level of Study at Higher Education by Declared Disability/ No Declared Disability



Source: Higher Education Enrolment data, DELNI

Subject areas in Higher Education

Overall, people with and without a declared disability chose to study broadly similar subject areas in Higher Education, especially from 2004/05 onwards (see Table 6). There was little variation in the popularity of the top three subjects in each of the years.

Disability

In 2007/08:

- **Arts & Humanities** (17%) was the most popular subject area for people **with** a declared disability, while **Medical Sciences** (21%) was the most popular subject area for people **without** a declared disability.
- Students **with** a declared disability were more likely than those **without** a declared disability to enrol on **Arts & Humanities** courses (17% vs. 12%) and slightly less likely to enrol on **Medical Sciences** courses (17% vs. 21%).

In 1998/99:

- **Business & Communications** (18%) was the most popular subject area for people **with** a declared disability, while **Medical Sciences** (18%) was the most popular subject area for people **without** a declared disability.

Between 1998/99 and 2007/08:

- Increases in the proportions of students enrolling on **Medical Sciences** have been more marked for those with a declared disability (11% to 17%) than for those without a declared disability (18% to 21%).
- The proportion of those with a declared disability enrolling on **Maths, Computer Science, Engineering & Technology** courses has decreased slightly (17% to 14%).

Table 6: Higher Education Subject Area Enrolments in rank order²⁰ for students with / without a Declared Disability

	2007/08		2004/05		2001/02		1998/99	
Those with a declared disability top three subject areas								
1st	Arts & Humanities	17%	Arts & Humanities	19%	Arts & Humanities	19%	Business & Communications	18%
2nd	Medical Sciences	17%	Medical Sciences	17%	Maths, Comp. Science, Engin. & Technology	18%	Arts & Humanities	17%
3rd	Business & Communications	16%	Social Studies & Education	16%	Business & Communications	15%	Maths, Comp. Science, Engin. & Technology	17%
Those without a declared disability top three subject areas								
1st	Medical Sciences	21%	Medical Sciences	23%	Medical Sciences	21%	Medical Sciences	18%
2nd	Business & Communications	17%	Social Studies & Education	17%	Social Studies & Education	17%	Social Studies & Education	17%
3rd	Social Studies & Education	17%	Business & Communications	16%	Business & Communications	16%	Business & Communications	17%

Source: Higher Education Enrolment data, DELNI

Irish Travellers

Summary: Irish Travellers

4.1 Educational Attainment

4.1.1 Over the aggregate period 2003/04-2007/08, there has been a noticeable gap between the highest educational attainment of Traveller and non-Traveller school leavers. In this period, a majority (58%) of Irish Travellers left school with **no GCSE qualifications**. This compares with **5%** of non-Traveller school leavers.

4.2 Educational Destinations

4.2.1 Overall, in 2003/04-2007/08, school leavers who were Irish Travellers were less likely than non-Travellers to say they would be going on to **Further and Higher Education** or **training**. For example, in this aggregated time-period, zero percent of Irish Travellers indicated they intended to continue on to **Higher Education**.

4.2.2 In 2003/04-2007/08 school leavers who were Irish Travellers were more likely than non-Travellers to say they were going on to **unemployment**.

1. Highest Education Attainment of Economically Active Adults

Labour Force Survey Data on the highest educational attainment of economically active Irish Travellers is not disclosed as the figures are too small for a reliable estimate (less than minimum quotation level of 8,000 cases).

2. Highest Education Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults

Labour Force Survey Data on the highest educational attainment of economically inactive Irish Travellers is not disclosed as the figures are too small for a reliable estimate (less than minimum quotation level of 8,000 cases).

3. Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers

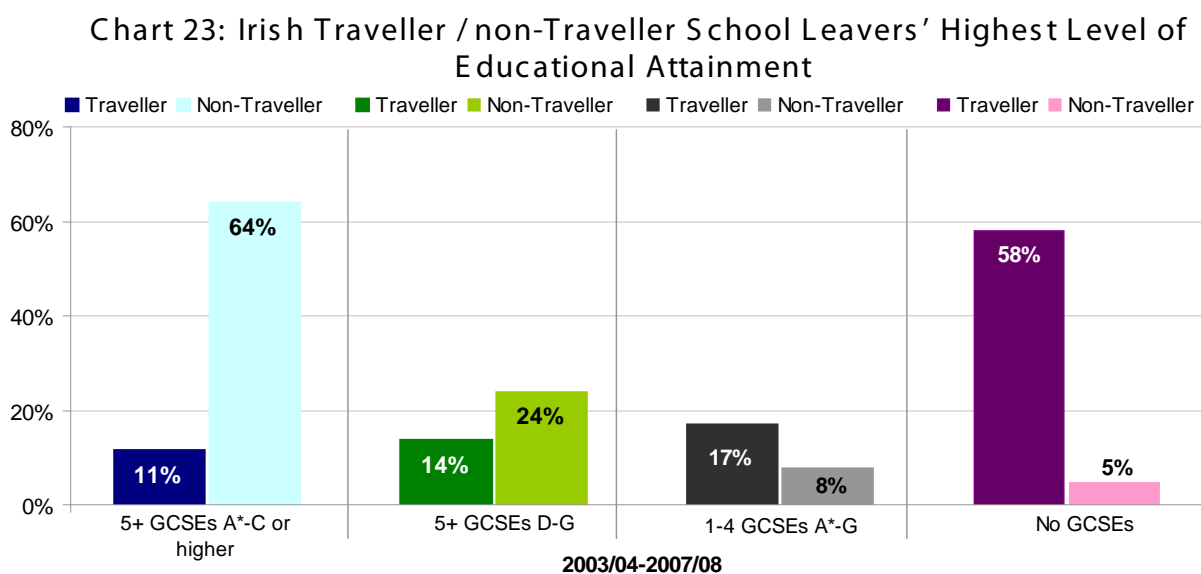
Using data from the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education), this section examines the **educational attainment** of Irish Travellers and non-Travellers on leaving school in Northern Ireland.²²

²² Data on Irish Travellers is presented in a combined 5 year period of 2003/04 – 2007/08 to compensate for low sample sizes.

Irish Travellers

Overall, the majority (58%) of Irish Travellers left school with no GCSE qualifications. In comparison, two-thirds (64%) of non-Travellers left school with **5 or more GCSEs A*-C or higher**²³ (see Chart 23).

- In the period 2003/04-2007/08, one-in-ten (11%) Irish Travellers left school with **5 or more GCSEs A*-C or higher**.
- Irish Travellers were substantially more likely than non-Travellers to leave school with **no GCSEs** (58% vs. 5%).



Source: School Leavers Survey, DENI

4. Non-employment Destinations of School Leavers

Using data from the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education), this section examines the intended **non-employment destinations**²⁴ of Irish Travellers and non-Travellers on leaving school in Northern Ireland.²⁵

Overall, Irish Travellers were more likely to say they were going on to **unemployment** and less likely to be continuing in **education** or **training** than non-Travellers (see Chart 24).

- Irish Travellers were substantially less likely than non-Travellers to say they were going on to **Further Education** (20% vs. 28%) or **Higher Education** (0% vs. 38%).

²³ This category is composed of the following subcategories: 5 or more GCSEs A*-C, + 1 A-level A-E, + 2 or more A-levels A-E. Data is presented in this format to compensate for low sample sizes.

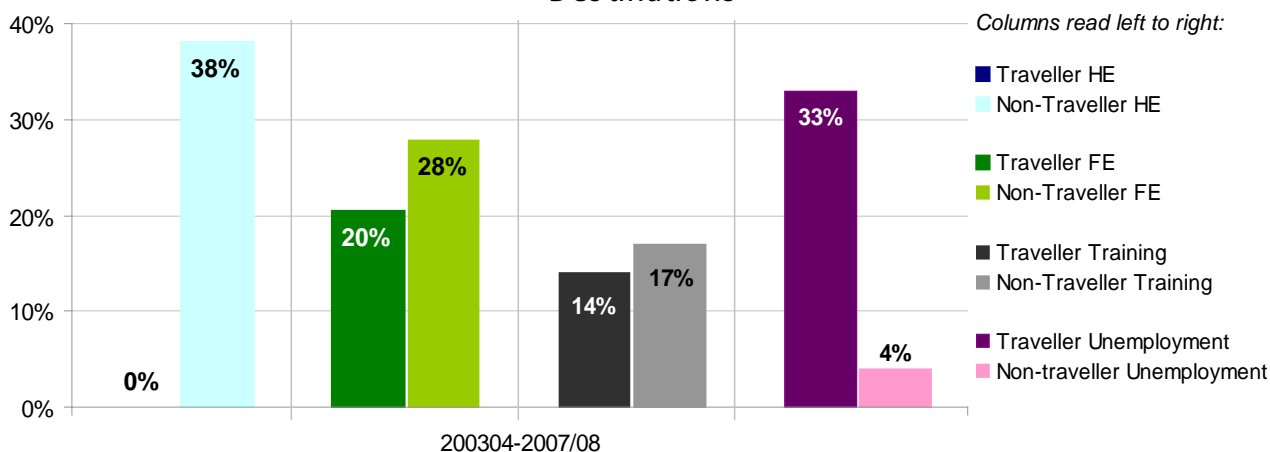
²⁴ Non-employment destinations are Further Education, Higher Education, training schemes or unemployment.

²⁵ Data on Irish Travellers is presented in a combined 5 year period of 2003/04 – 2007/08 to compensate for low sample sizes.

Irish Travellers

- Irish Travellers (14%) were slightly less likely to indicate they were going on to **training schemes** than non-Travellers (17%).
- However, Irish Travellers were substantially more likely than non-Travellers to say they were going on to **unemployment** (33% vs. 4%)

Chart 24: Irish Traveller/ non-Traveller School Leavers' stated Non-Employment Destinations



Source: School Leavers Survey, DENI

5. Participation in Further Education

It is not possible to publish data on the Irish Travellers' participation in Further Education as sample sizes are too small for disclosure.

6. Participation in Higher Education

It is not possible to publish data on the Irish Travellers' participation in Higher Education as sample sizes are too small for disclosure or for reliable estimate (All HESA figures are rounded to the nearest 5).

Children in Care

Summary: Children in Care

5.1 Educational Attainment

5.1.1 In 2007/08, the majority of Care-leavers (53%) left school with no **GCSE qualifications**. This compares with 4% of all school leavers.

5.1.2 Between 2001 and 2008 the gap between the highest educational attainment of Care-leavers and all school leavers has widened slightly.

- Since 2001 the proportions of Care-leavers leaving school with **A-levels A-E** has remained broadly unchanged, while the proportion of all school leavers has increased.

5.2 Educational Destinations

5.2.1 In 2007/08, 'care' leavers were less likely than all school leavers to say they would be continuing on to **Further and Higher Education** or **training** and more likely to say they would be going on to **unemployment**.

5.2.2 Between 2001 and 2008, the gap in the proportion of Care-leavers and all school leavers saying they would continue on to **Further and Higher Education** has widened slightly

1. Highest Education Attainment of Economically Active Adults

Labour Force Survey Data on the highest educational attainment of economically active Care-leavers is not disclosed as the figures are too small for a reliable estimate (less than minimum quotation level of 8,000 cases).

2. Highest Education Attainment of Economically Inactive Adults

Labour Force Survey Data on the highest educational attainment of economically inactive Care-leavers is not disclosed as the figures are too small for a reliable estimate (less than minimum quotation level of 8,000 cases).

3. Highest Educational Attainment of School Leavers

Using data from the Care Leavers Survey (Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety), this section examines the **educational attainment** of Care-leavers and all school leavers in Northern Ireland.²⁶

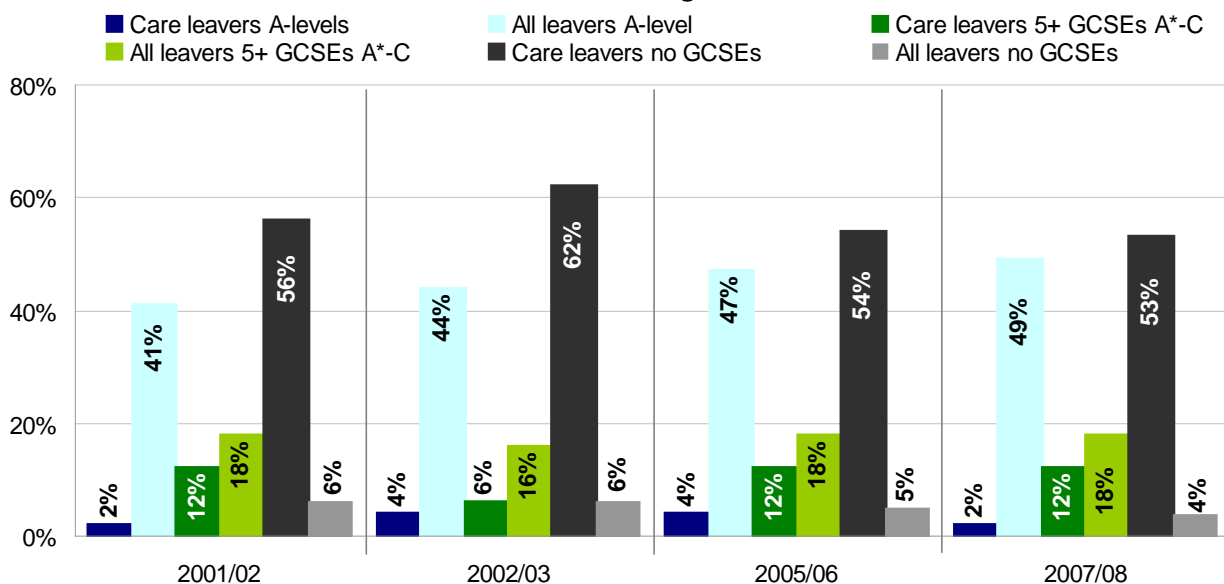
²⁶ DHSSPS gather data on care leavers educational attainment and destinations from the Northern Ireland Care Leavers Survey. The questionnaire differs from the one used by DENI to collect data for the School Leavers Survey, which is reflected in how the data is presented.

Children in Care

Overall, Care-leavers were less likely than all school leavers to leave school with **educational qualifications**, and were more likely to leave **no GCSEs** (see Chart 25). Furthermore, over the ten year period, the **gap** between the highest education attainment of Care-leavers and all school leavers **widened**.

- In 2007/08, Care-leavers were less likely than all school leavers to leave school with **A-levels A-E** (2% Care-leavers; 49% all leavers) or **5 or more GCSEs A*-C** (12% Care-leavers; 18% all leavers), but were more likely to leave school with **no GCSEs** (53% Care-leavers; 4% all leavers).
- In 2001/02, Care-leavers were less likely than all school leavers to leave school with **A-levels A-E** (2% Care-leavers; 41% all leavers) or **5 or more GCSEs A*-C** (12% Care-leavers; 18% all leavers), but were more likely to leave school with **no GCSEs** (56% Care-leavers; 4% all leavers).
- Since 2001/02, the proportion of Care-leavers leaving school with **A-levels A-E** has remained broadly unchanged ($\leq 4\%$), while the proportion all school leavers has increased (41% to 49%). Thus that gap between the two groups has widened.

Chart 25: Care-leavers / All School Leavers Highest Level of Education Attainment²⁷



Sources: OC1 Survey, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety NI (DHSSPS NI), and School Leavers Survey, DENI

²⁷ All school leavers data is not available from DENI for 2002/03. Thus DENI data from 2003/04 is used as a comparison to Care-leavers' 2002/03 data.

4. Non-employment Destinations of School Leavers

Using data from the Care Leavers Survey (Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety), this section examines the **non-employment destinations**²⁸ of Care-leavers and all school leavers to identify if differences in non-employment destinations exist.

Overall, in 2007/08, Care-leavers were more likely to say they were going on to **unemployment** and less likely to be continuing in **education** than all school leavers (Chart 26).

- A much lower proportion of Care-leavers than all school leavers said they were going to **Further Education** (14% vs. 30%) or **Higher Education** (4% vs. 40%).
- Similar proportions of Care-leavers (16%) and all school leavers (15%) indicated they were going on to **training schemes**.
- A much greater proportion of Care-leavers than all school leavers said they were going on to **unemployment** (34% vs. 3%).

Between 2001/02 and 2007/08, the difference in the proportion of Care-leavers and all school leavers continuing on in education has widened slightly (see Chart 26).

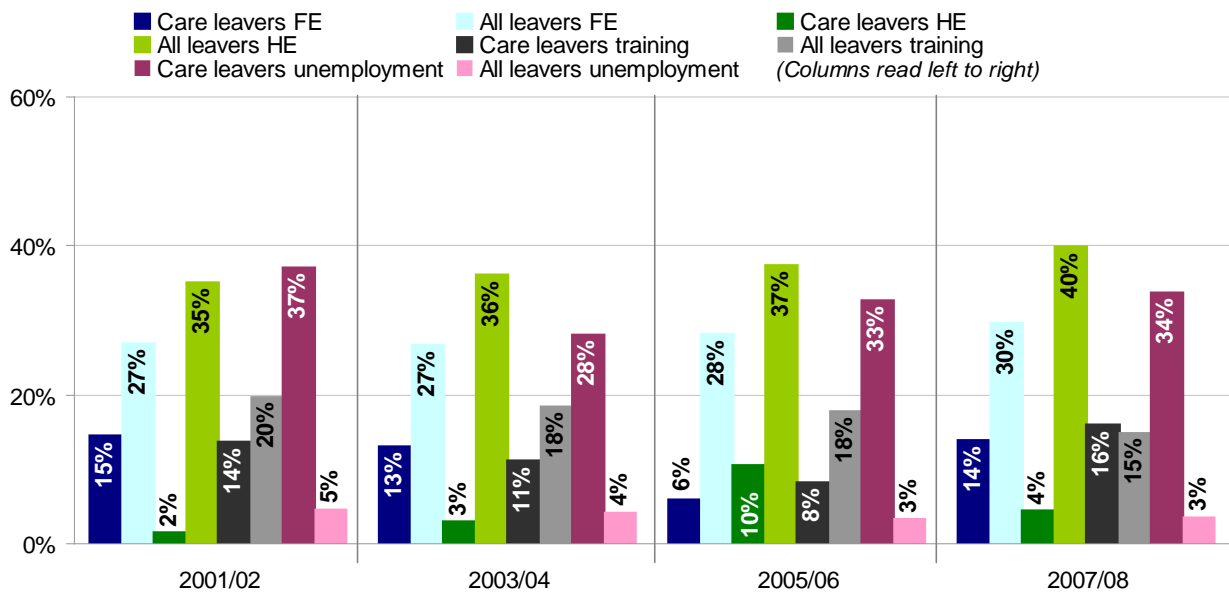
Since 2001/02:

- The proportion of Care-leavers going on to **Further** and **Higher Education** has remained broadly unchanged (FE: around 14%, HE: around 2%), while proportion of all school leavers has increased slightly (FE: 27% to 30%; HE: 35% to 40%).
- The proportion of Care-leavers going on to **training schemes** has remained broadly unchanged (around 15%), while the proportion of all school leavers has decreased slightly (20% to 15%).
- The proportion of Care-leavers (around 34%) and all school leavers (around 3%) going on to **unemployment** has fluctuated but remained broadly remained unchanged.

²⁸ Non-employment destinations are Further Education, Higher Education, training schemes or unemployment.

Children in Care

Chart 26: Care-leavers / All School Leavers stated Non-Employment Destinations²⁷



Sources: OC1 Survey, DHSSPS NI and School Leavers Survey, DENI

5. Participation in Further Education

It is not possible to publish data on Care-leavers' participation in Further Education as sample sizes are too small for disclosure.

6. Participation in Higher Education

It is not possible to publish data on the Care-leavers' participation in Higher Education as sample sizes are too small for disclosure or for reliable estimate (All HESA figures are rounded to the nearest 5).

CONCLUSION

While there is evidence of improvements for the majority of the groups examined, is it evident that differences in educational outcomes continue to exist with regards the educational attainment, choices of destinations and subject selections for the different groups.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

While improvements in the educational attainment of both Protestant and Roman Catholic school leavers has occurred, the increase in **A-level** attainment has been less marked for Protestant school leavers than for Roman Catholic school leavers, resulting in a widening of the difference between the two groups.

Similarly, while the improvements in the highest education attainment of both males and females has occurred, the increase in **degree of above** attainment has been less marked for economically active males than for females, while the increase in **A-level** attainment has been less marked for male school leavers than for females school leavers. These finding suggest that females are outpacing males in terms of the highest level of educational attainment they achieve.

Again, while the improvements in the highest education attainment of both those **with** and **without a declared disability** has occurred, the increase in **degree or above** attainment has been less marked for working age **disabled people** than for working age **non-disabled people**, resulting in a widening of the difference between the two groups.

It isn't possible to comment on trends over time for Irish Travellers, but it is notable that the majority of Irish Travellers left school with **no GCSEs**, while the majority of non-Travellers left school with **GCSEs or higher** qualification. This suggest that differences in educational aspirations exists between the travelling and non-travelling community.

Little or no improvement in the educational attainment of Care-leavers leaving school occurred between 2001/02 and 2007/08, with the majority of Care-leavers consistency leaving school with **no GCSEs**. This contrasts to the increase in highest education attainment of all school leavers, and has resulted in a widening of the difference between the two groups. Furthermore, it suggests that differences in educational aspirations exists between young people in Care and those not in Care.

CONCLUSION

EDUCATIONAL DESTINATIONS

Over time, the proportions of Protestant and Roman Catholics **enrolling** in either **Further** or **Higher Education** remained relatively unchanged, with Roman Catholics consistently accounting for a greater proportion of enrolments than Protestants in both educational destinations.

Over time, the proportions of males and females **enrolling** in **Higher Education** remained relatively unchanged, while the proportion of males enrolling in **Further Education** increased. Nevertheless, females consistently accounting for slightly more enrolments in **Further Education** and considerably more enrolments in **Higher Education** than males.

Over time, people with a declared disability were consistently and substantially less likely than those without a declared disability to enrol in either **Further** or **Higher Education**. However, while little improvement has occurred in the proportion of those with a declared disability enrolling in **Further Education**, the proportion enrolling in **Higher Education** has nearly doubled.

It isn't possible to comment on trends over time for Irish Travellers, but it is notable that the most common intended **non-employment destination** for Irish Travellers leaving school was **unemployment**, while the most common intended destination for non-Travellers was **Higher Education**. Furthermore, in the aggregated time-period examined, zero percent of Irish Travellers indicated they intended to continue on to Higher Education.

Little or no improvement in the **non-employment destinations** of Care-leavers leaving school occurred between 2001/02 and 2007/08. The most common intended destination for Care-leavers leaving school remained **unemployment**, while the most common intended destination for all school leavers was **Higher Education**. Furthermore over time, the proportions of all school leavers intending to going on to **Further** or **Higher Education** increased, resulting in a **widening** of the difference between the proportions of Care-leavers and all school leavers intending to progress to **third level education**.

SUBJECT AREAS IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Over time, Protestants and Roman Catholics consistently choose to study very similar subject areas in both **Further** and **Higher Education**. In **Further Education**, the subject areas which appeared in the top three choices for both communities for each of the years examined were:

CONCLUSION

Construction, Built Environment & Engineering and **Business, Management and Communications**. In **Higher Education**, similar subjects areas regularly featured in the top three choices for both communities - **Medical Sciences, Business and Communications** and **Social Studies & Education**.

Males and females consistently choose to study very different subject areas in both **Further** and **Higher Education**, with little alteration occurring in their subject area choices over the time period. In both sectors, males dominated in the more technological subjects areas: **Construction, Built Environment and Engineering** (Further Education) and **Maths, Computer Science & Technology** (Higher Education), while females dominated in the more care-orientated subject areas: **Health & Social Care** (Further Education) and **Medical Sciences** (Higher Education).

Over time, people with and without a declared disability consistently choose to study relatively different subject areas in **Further** and broadly similar subject areas **Higher Education**. In **Further Education**, the most commonly studied subject area for people with a declared disability was **Education**, while for those without a declared disability it was **Business, Management and Communications**. In **Higher Education**, **Arts & Humanities** was the most commonly studied subject areas for people with a declared disability, but didn't feature in the top three subject area choices for those with a declared disability. Conversely, **Medical Sciences** was the most popular subject area for those without a declared disability, but did feature in the top three subject areas for those with a declared disability for 2004/05 and 2007/08.

Furthermore, with regards to trends in subject area choices among the different groups, it is interesting to note that some of the subject areas that contribute to the creation of highly skilled knowledge-driven economy and labour force are decreasing in popularity among the groups examined. In **Further Education**, **Applied Science** has steadily decreased in popularity as subject area among all the groups, while **ICT** has decreased in popularity for every group except for those with a declared disability. Over the years, subject areas preference in **Higher Education** has remained relatively stable when examined by gender or by disability. However, among Protestants and Roman Catholics, a notable decrease has occurred in the popularity of **Biological, Physical & Agricultural Sciences** and **Maths, Computer Science & Technology** subjects.

APPENDIX 1: ENROLMENTS IN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 1: Enrolments in Further Education by Community Background

	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Total
2007/08	42,716	45%	52,362	55%	95,078
2004/05	45,482	46%	54,281	54%	99,763
2001/02	43,679	45%	52,941	55%	96,620
1998/99	40,124	45%	48,091	55%	88,215

Table 2: Enrolments in Higher Education by Community Background

	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Total
2007/08	14,205	42%	19,840	58%	34,045
2004/05	15,095	43%	19,855	57%	34,955
2001/02	12,100	42%	16,455	58%	28,555
1998/99	7,295	44%	9,445	56%	16,740

Table 3: Enrolments in Further Education by Gender

	Male		Female		Total
2007/08	67,981	48%	74,119	52%	142,100
2004/05	64,337	43%	83,987	57%	148,324
2001/02	50,660	42%	70,997	58%	121,657
1998/99	45,390	39%	71,986	61%	117,376

Table 4: Enrolments in Higher Education by Gender

	Male		Female		Total
2007/08	19,160	40%	29,040	60%	48,200
2004/05	20,475	39%	32,455	61%	52,930
2001/02	18,500	39%	28,655	61%	47,155
1998/99	16,850	40%	25,285	60%	42,135

Table 5: Enrolments in Further Education by those with / without a Disability

	Disability		No Disability		Total
2007/08	6,165	4%	135,935	96%	142,100
2004/05	6,263	4%	142,061	96%	148,324
2001/02	4,103	3%	117,554	97%	121,657
1998/99	4,121	4%	113,255	96%	117,376

Table 6: Enrolments in Higher Education by those with / without a Disability

	Disability		No Disability		Total
2007/08	3,465	7%	44,730	93%	48,200
2004/05	2,805	5%	50,125	95%	52,930
2001/02	2,040	4%	45,115	96%	47,155
1998/99	1,525	4%	40,610	96%	42,135

GLOSSARY

Disability

Declared disability	people who have stated that they do have a disability.
Without a declared disability	people who do not have a disability and also people for whom disability status is unknown.

Economic status

Economically active	people aged 16 and over who are either in employment or unemployed.
Economically inactive	people who are neither in employment nor unemployed on the ILO measure. This group includes, for example, all those who were looking after a home, are retired, sick or in education.

Highest educational attainment of adults

Degree or above	degree or degree equivalent and above including first degree, postgraduate diplomas and professional qualifications.
Higher Qualification (other than a degree or above)	other Higher Education below degree level including HND/HNC/ BTEC (Higher), teaching and nursing qualifications.
A-level or equivalent	including vocational level 3.
GCSE A-C or equivalent	including Trade Apprenticeships, vocational level 2.
Other qualifications	including vocational level 1 and below.
No qualifications	encompasses those with no formal qualifications.

Further Education levels of study

Level 1 & under (F.E. subject level enrolment)	equates to GCSE Grades D-G and the following at NVQ/HE Level 1-0 or HESA levels R,S,X: NVQs, Certificates, Diplomas, Professional Qualifications, Credits and other qualifications.
Level 2 (F.E. subject level enrolment)	equates to GCSE Grades A*-C and the following at NVQ/HE Level 2 or HESA level Q: NVQs, Certificates, Diplomas, Professional Qualifications, Credits and other qualifications.
Level 3 (F.E. subject level enrolment)	equates to A-levels and the following at NVQ/HE Level 3 or HESA level P: NVQs, Certificates, Diplomas, Professional Qualifications, Credits and other qualifications.

GLOSSARY

Further Education levels of study (continued)

Higher Education level (F.E. subject level enrolment) equates to the following at NVQ/HE Levels 4-8 or HESA levels D,E,L,M,H,I,J or C²⁹: NVQs, Certificates, Diplomas, Professional Qualifications, Credits and other qualifications

Northern Ireland school leavers

School Leavers those leaving grammar and secondary schools in Northern Ireland. Independent and special school are not included in this category.

Educational Destinations destinations are reported by the school leavers and recorded by the school. Destination is defined by intended Institution (e.g. Queen's University Belfast is defined as an institute of Higher Education). Institutions may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education levels.

Further Education includes all Institutes of Further Education

Higher Education includes all Institutes of Higher Education and teacher training colleges.

School leavers levels of attainment

2 or more A-levels A-E includes those with 2 or more A-levels at Grades A-E and those with GNVQ advanced qualifications.

5 or more GCSEs A*-C includes those with 5 or more GCSEs at Grades A*-C and those with GNVQ Intermediate qualifications.

No GCSEs includes those who did not undertake any GCSE examinations or who obtained no graded results. It also includes those who obtained other qualifications such as RSA, Pitman, City & Guilds etc.

²⁹ HESA level C is equal to a Certificate of Higher Education and is the lowest Higher Education level at which a student can be enrolled in an institute of Further Education.

GLOSSARY

Labour Force Survey Data – Please note that the data defined as working age in this publication has been categorised using the pre-2010 definition. Also, please note that 2008 data has been grossed to 2008 mid-year population estimates, not 2009. LFS data is rounded to the nearest 1,000, as per ONS guidelines. The reader should also bear in mind that estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population and care should be taken when making inferences from them.

School Leavers Data – Please note that the schools leavers data presented in this publication is not a fully representative of NI schools leavers because it excludes those with 1 A-level, those with 4 or less GCSEs at Grades A*-C and those with GCSEs at Grades D-G. DENI recommend that the GCSE highest qualification data should not be viewed at only those achieving 5 or more GCSEs at Grades A*-C, as the statistics are a subset of the information published by DE entitled 'Qualifications and Destinations of NI school Leavers'.

Enrolments in Further Education Data – Please note that the definitions of 'subject areas' used in this report have been coded from a wider range of subjects as listed by DELNI. Please find details of these below:

DELNI FE subject areas	Recoded subject areas
Art & Design	Art & Design
Administration & Office Skills	Administration & Office Skills
Business & Management	Business, Management & Communications
Media & communication	
Construction, Built Environment & Civil Engineering	Construction, Built Environment & Engineering
Electrical / Electronic Engineering	
Mechanical Engineering	
Motor Vehicle	
Distribution - Retail, Wholesaling & Warehousing	Distribution & Transport
Transport	
Hairdressing & Beauty	Hairdressing & Beauty
Education	Education
Health & Social Care	Health & Social Care
Information & Communication Technology	Information & Communication Technology
Leisure Tourism & Recreational	Leisure Tourism & Hospitality
Hospitality	
Applied Science	Applied Science
Agriculture	Agriculture & fishing
Fishing	
Manufacturing / Processing	Manufacturing / Processing & Mining/ Quarrying
Mining, Oil Extraction & Quarrying	

TECHNICAL NOTES

Enrolments in Higher Education Data – Please note that DELNI round Higher Education data to the nearest 5, as per HESA guidelines. From 2000/01 figures are based on full year enrolment data. Prior to this they were based on a snapshot of enrolments at 1st December in the relevant academic year.

Full year enrolment data is based on the new HESA Standard Registration Population definition introduced in the 2007/08 academic year. Writing up and sabbatical students are now excluded from the enrolments population where they were previously included in published enrolment data.

Please note that the definition of ‘level of study’ used in this report has been coded from HESA ‘general qualification aim’ course codes. Please find details of these below:

DELNI HE general qualification aim 1998/99-2006/07	Recoded HE level of study
02 Doctorate degree mainly by research.	Postgraduate
03 Doctorate degree not mainly by research.	
04 Masters degree mainly by research.	
05 Masters degree not mainly by research.	
08 Postgraduate diploma or certificate (not PGCE) not mainly by research.	
10 Professional qualification at postgraduate level (not PGCE)	
12 Ordinary PGCE.	
62 Institutional postgraduate credit which may be counted towards qualifications contained within codes 02 to 52.	
98 No formal postgraduate qualification (advanced/HE).	
15 Post Registration health and social care courses.	Undergraduate
18 First degree leading towards obtaining eligibility to register to practice with a Health or Social Care or Veterinary statutory regulatory body.	
19 First degree with eligibility to register to practice (doctor/dentist/veterinary surgeon).	
20 First degree with Qualified Teacher Status/registration with General Teaching Council.	
21 First degree.	
22 Enhanced first degree.	
23 First degree and diploma (to be obtained concurrently).	
24 Intercalated first degree.	
25 Professional qualification at undergraduate level, with or without academic qualification.	
26 Professional qualification for serving school teachers	
27 Post degree diploma/certificate at undergraduate level	

TECHNICAL NOTES

DELNI HE general qualification aim 1998/99-2006/07	Recorded HE level of study
28 Foundation degree.	Undergraduate (continued)
29 Diploma of Higher Education.	
30 Certificate of Higher Education.	
31 Foundation course at HE level	
32 Other undergraduate diplomas and certificates.	
33 Diploma in HE leading towards obtaining eligibility to register to practice with a Health or Social Care regulatory body	
41 HND.	
42 HNC.	
61 Institutional undergraduate credit which may be counted towards qualifications contained within codes 02 to 52 (includes CAT Schemes).	

DELNI HE general qualification aim 2007/08 onwards	Recorded HE level of study
02 Doctorate degree mainly by research.	Postgraduate
03 Doctorate degree not mainly by research.	
04 Masters degree mainly by research.	
05 Masters degree not mainly by research.	
08 Postgraduate diploma or certificate (not PGCE) not mainly by research.	
10 Professional qualification at postgraduate level (not PGCE)	
12 Ordinary PGCE.	
62 Institutional postgraduate credit which may be counted towards qualifications contained within codes 02 to 52.	
M42 Advanced Professional Certificate at level M	
L91 Visiting research students at levels D or L, with formal or informal credit	
M78 Taught qualification at level M (where qualification at level H &/ or level M is a pre-requisite for course entry) leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board (Part 3 qualification).	
M88 Taught qualification at level M (where a qualification at level H is a pre-requisite for course entry) leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board (Part 2 qualification)	
98 No formal postgraduate qualification (advanced/HE).	

TECHNICAL NOTES

DELNI HE general qualification aim 2007/08 onwards	Recorded HE level of study
15 Post Registration health and social care courses.	Undergraduate
18 First degree leading towards obtaining eligibility to register to practice with a Health or Social Care or Veterinary statutory regulatory body.	
19 First degree with eligibility to register to practice (doctor/dentist/veterinary surgeon).	
20 First degree with Qualified Teacher Status/registration with General Teaching Council.	
21 First degree.	
22 Enhanced first degree.	
23 First degree and diploma (to be obtained concurrently).	
24 Intercalated first degree.	
25 Professional qualification at undergraduate level, with or without academic qualification.	
26 Professional qualification for serving school teachers	
27 Post degree diploma/certificate at undergraduate level	
43 Other formal HE qualification of less than degree standard (<i>only used in 2007/08</i>)	
H91 Visiting students at level H, with formal or informal credit	
H18 First degree with honours leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board (Part 1 qualification)	
H42 Certificate at level H	
H88 Qualification at level H (where another qualification at level H is a pre-requisite for course entry) leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board (Part 2 qualification)	

TECHNICAL NOTES

Additionally, please note that the definition of 'subject areas' used in this report have been coded from a wider range of subjects as listed by DELNI. Please find details of these below:

DELNI HE subject areas	Recoded HE subject areas
Medicine & dentistry	Medical Sciences
Subjects allied to medicine	
Biological sciences	Biological / Physical / Agricultural Sciences
Veterinary science	
Agriculture & related subjects	
Physical sciences	
Mathematical sciences (In 1998/99 coded as Mathematical sciences & informatics)	Mathematical / Computer Science & Engineering / Technology
Computer science (In 1998/99 coded as IT)	
Engineering and technology	
Architecture, building & planning (In 1998/99 coded as Architecture).	Architecture, building & planning
Social, economic & political studies	Social Studies / Education
Education (In 1998/99 coded as Education & Leisure).	
Law	Law
Business & administrative studies	Business / Communication
Mass communication & documentation (in 2001/ 02 coded as Librarianship & information science)	
Languages (In 1998/99 coded as Languages & related disciplines	Arts / Humanities
Humanities	
Creative arts & design (In 1998/99 coded as Creative arts)	
Combined	Unknown (not included in publication)

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June 2010