

Fair Admissions? ... 'non traditional students'

Distinction and Diversity
in Higher Education



Andy Westwood
24th April 2012

What do we mean by ‘non traditional’ students?

- Socio-economic group – hence access agreements, OFFA, NSP etc?
 - Improving recruitment, retention and student success?
 - Raising aspiration and attainment from under-represented groups
 - Improving social mobility and life chances
-
- *All valid but only a small part of the story...*

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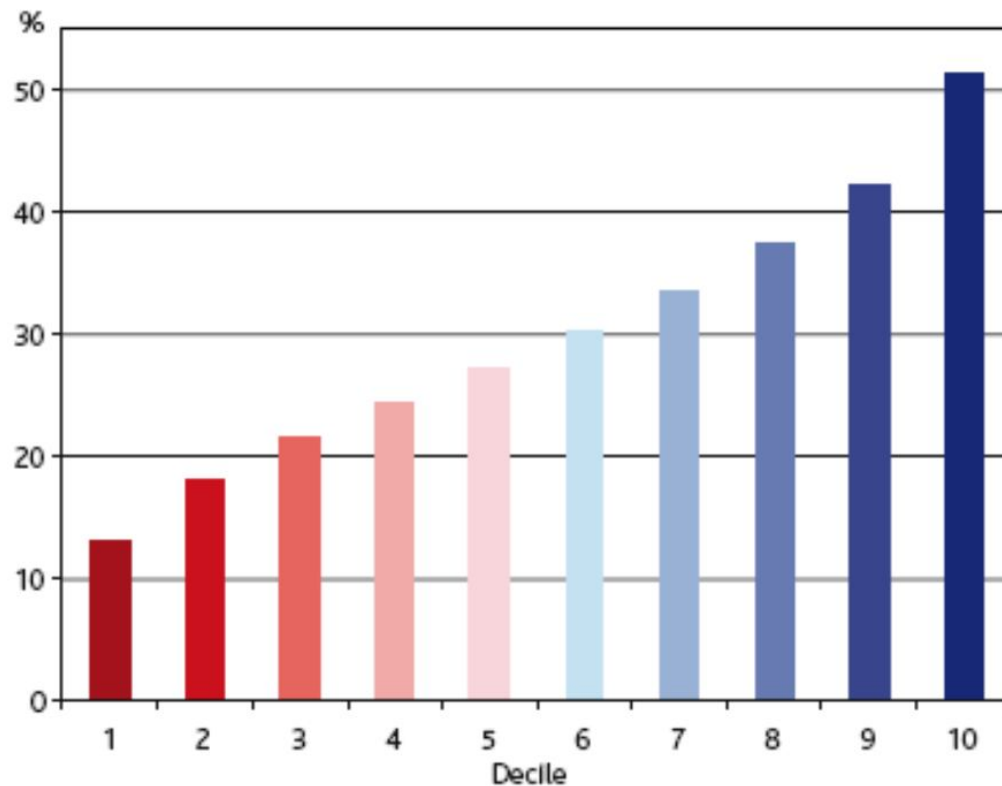


Who goes to higher education?

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Chance of attending university by decile of opportunity in Britain



Source: Danny Dorling

Has the case been made for widening access and a mass participation HE system....?

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The Telegraph

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Professor Les Ebdon's model of mediocrity is coming to a university near you

The Offa head's own University of Bedfordshire raises worrying questions.



A photograph of a red brick building, identified as the University of Bedfordshire Luton. In the foreground, there is a large, modern, silver sculpture with a stylized orange logo. A bicycle is parked on a rack in front of the building.

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Steve Doughty

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Breastfeeding Counselling, Carnival Arts and Football Studies... the world of Higher Education according to Professor Ebdon

By STEVE DOUGHTY
UPDATED: 18:41, 20 February 2012

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Vince Cable and David Willetts have their way and Professor Les Ebdon is to take charge of the quango designed to ensure fair access to universities. He will speak for the poor and the under-represented in the fight against those elitist institutions that bar the way to higher education for the disadvantaged. He has threatened to fine universities that do not co-operate.

'I am passionate about access to higher education and strongly believe that no one should be put off from going to university because of their family background or income,' he said.



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A photograph showing the aftermath of a bus crash in a tunnel. Debris is scattered on the ground, and a large fire is visible in the background.

But aren't too many graduates unemployed?....

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The Telegraph

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Graduate unemployment hits 15 year high

One-in-five students left university without a job last year as graduate unemployment soared to its highest level since the mid-90s.



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Graduate unemployment double
Statistics. Photo: ALAMY

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Oxford graduates pull pints in dire jobs market

More graduates of Oxford University go into jobs as waitresses, waiters or bar staff than chartered accountants or mechanical engineers, new figures show.

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Shocking truth about graduate unemployment: They have the same chance of being out of work as a school leaver with one GCSE

By BECKY BARROW

Last updated at 1:52 AM on 23rd February 2012

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A graduate aged 21 has the same chance of being unemployed as a 16-year-old school leaver with one GCSE, official figures revealed yesterday.

Around one in four of both groups is currently without a job.

The shocking statistics highlight the problems facing graduates leaving university at a time of crisis in the jobs market.



Which countries produce the most graduates?

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1 - Finland	(63%)
2 - Iceland	(57%)
2 - Slovakia	(57%)
4 - Poland	(50%)
5 - New Zealand	(48%)
6 - Denmark	(47%)
7 - Ireland	(46%)
8 - Portugal	(45%)
9 - Netherlands	(41%)
9 - Norway	(41%)
11 - Sweden	(40%)
12 - Japan	(39%)
13 - United States	(37%)
13 - Czech Republic	(36%)
15 - United Kingdom	(35%)

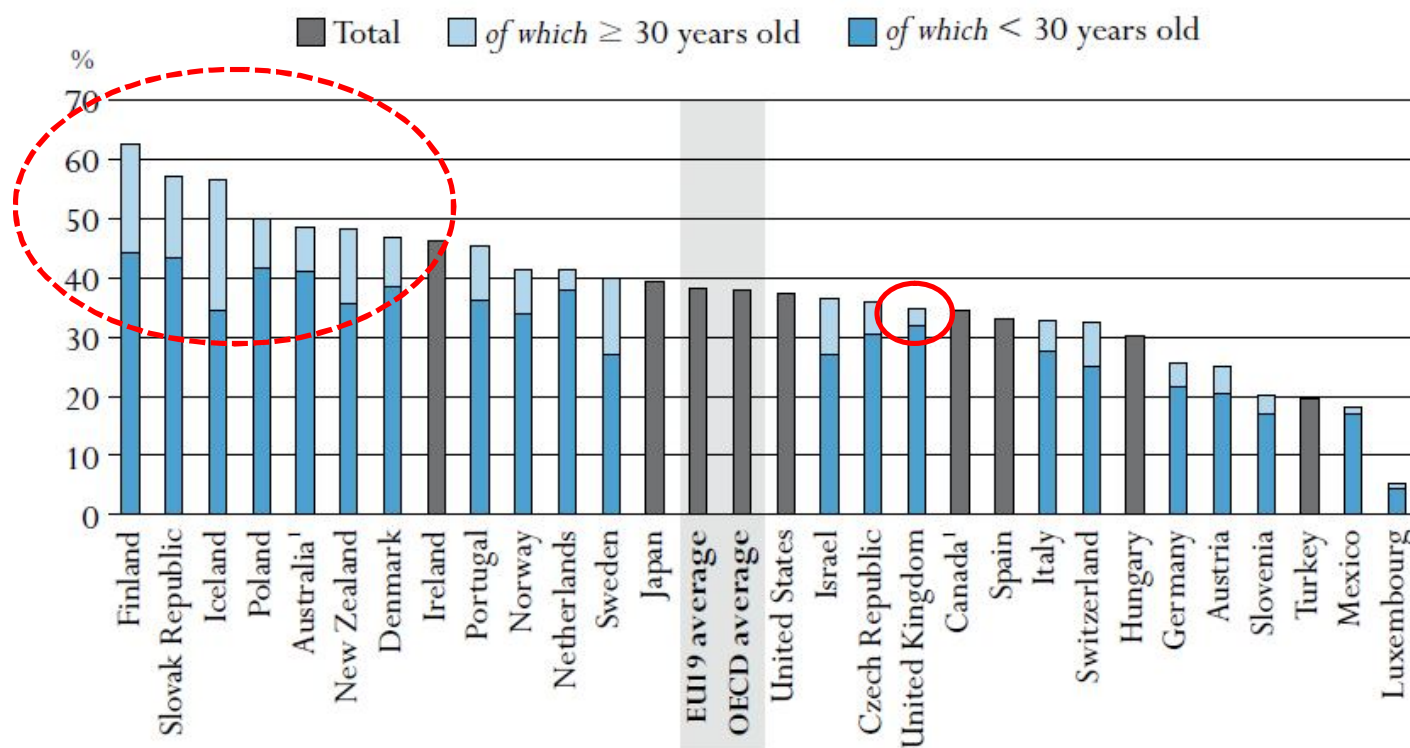
Percentage of young people who are first-time graduates from university, 2008.

Source: OECD

What kind of people go to university? (and are there too many?)

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GuildHE



1. Year of reference 2007.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the graduation rates for tertiary-type A education in 2008.

Source: OECD, Table A3.1. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eqq2010).

Students are changing...

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- 43% participation (less than US, Canada, S. Korea....)
- Third of students are part time
- Third are 21 or over
- 40%+ study within 25 miles of home
- Growth in young part time (eg at Open University)

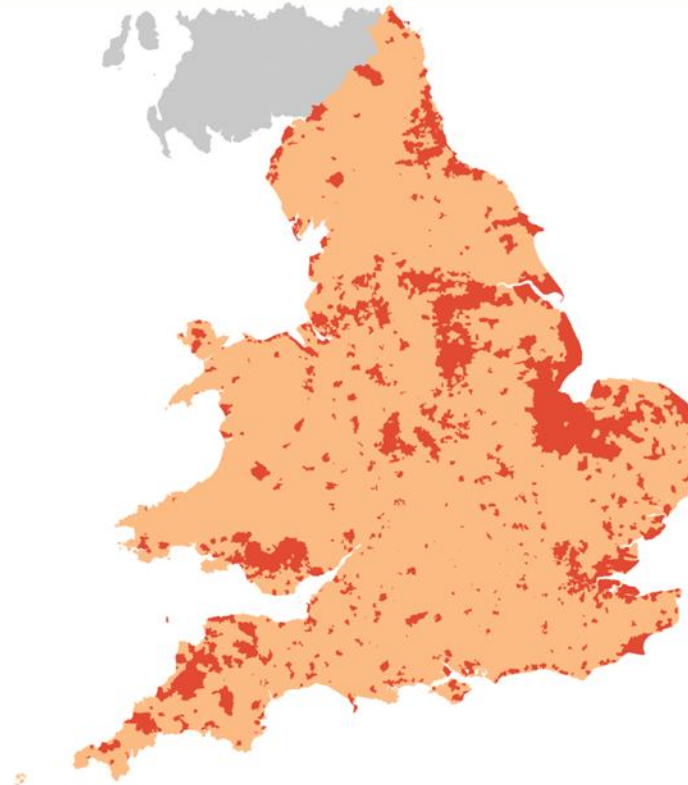
What else might we mean?

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HEFCE Common Evidence Base: Context Statistic, wards with low levels of HE qualifications

Wards with low levels of HE qualifications
(in lowest 40 per cent by mature population)



To be used in conjunction with the New University Challenge documentation at www.hefce.ac.uk
Mapping derived from 2007 Census, Output Area Boundaries (Crown copyright 2008)
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This analysis is informed by data shared with HEFCE by UCAS, HEFCE and SFC
Champion colours based on schemes from www.colourswatch.org
Mark Conner, Analytical Services Group, Higher Education Funding Council for England, February 2009
Analysis and presentation copyright HEFCE 2009

A bigger picture...

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- Clear OECD evidence - strong international trend for more people to go to university. Average net entry rates increased from 40% in 2000 to 57% in 2008 – every country increasing net entry rates over period.
- UCAS 2010/11 data shows demand outstripping supply – 697,351 applicants and 487,329 accepted places – applicants 9% up on 2009
- UCAS 2011/12 data shows drop but still over demand – third highest on record (and biggest drop since 1970s...)
- Average graduate will earn over £100,000 more, net of tax, than similar individual who achieved university entrance qualifications but did not go into HE - premium holding up in spite of recession.
- A strong employment premium – as other employment rates decline.
- Not just an economic premium. Graduates more healthy, more active in community more likely to pass on generational benefits to children

Wise words?

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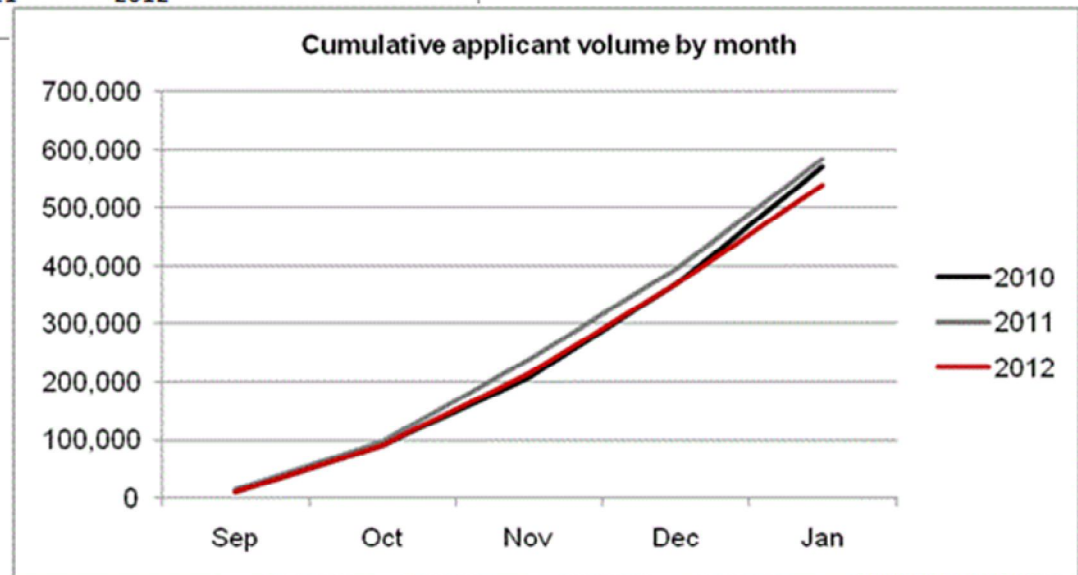
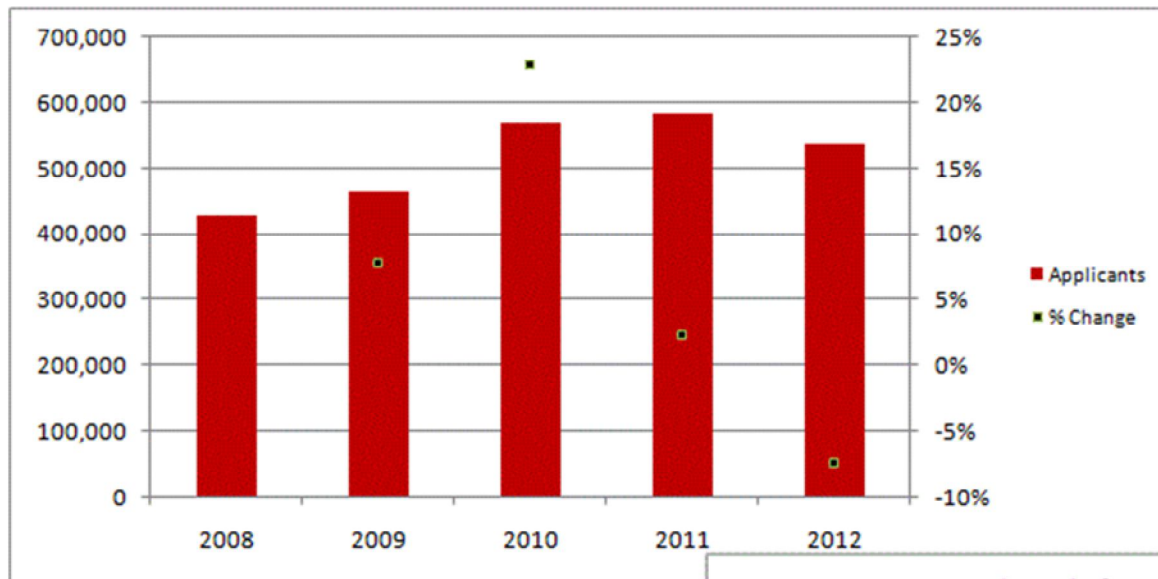


'I expect to see, in a university sector faced with the onset of more competition and more demanding students, a ferment of creative thinking on how to redesign course structures and manage major change among staff so as to promote higher quality but lower cost teaching. I may be missing something, but I haven't seen much evidence of this...'

Vince Cable April 2011

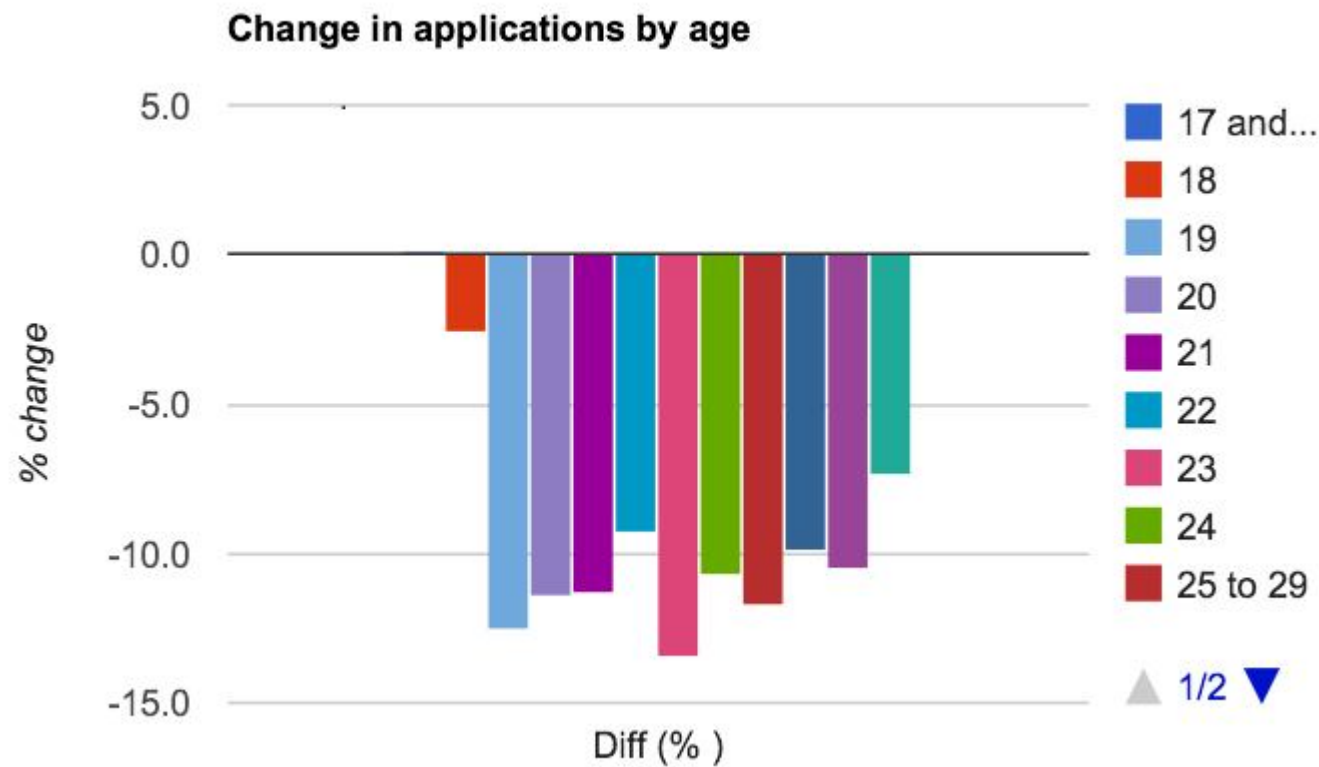
UCAS comparisons to 2008-11

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Applications by age

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What is the story of HE reform and admissions?

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- the young full time undergraduate...
- the institutions that largely recruit these students and offer this experience
- Social engineering, quotas etc etc
- Policies and a political narrative that largely reflect this?
- Lack of emphasis or understanding of the importance of the 'non traditional'?
- How are current UCAS applications described?

What isn't the story about?

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- Fairness?
- Older or part time applicants
- Non traditional students from non traditional places
- Working with people in the labour market or their employers
- Human capital as a catalyst for growth – where exactly is the workforce of 2015 and 2020?
- Incentivising universities to do more of this rather than more of the same (but more cheaply...)

Some quick conclusions...

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- UK well down OECD tables in output of graduates, no evidence that demand for HE is out of step with labour market demand for degrees
- Wage and other social returns remain strong - but effects and returns span entire working life – no ‘instant’ premium
- No guarantees against periods of unemployment or under-employment in a recession...
- We need more higher education and more ‘non-traditional’ ways of doing it...
- We need more students from disadvantaged and ‘non traditional’ backgrounds too...
- Not as much diversity in supply or in participation as there should be?