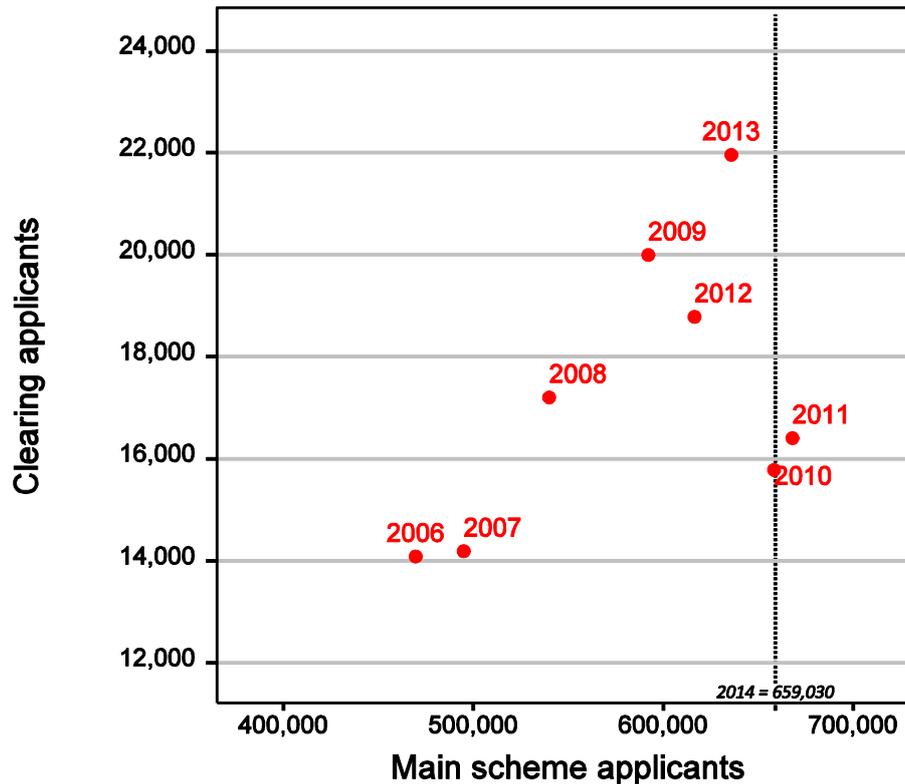




Around 20,000 new applicants expected in Clearing

From July onwards new applications to enter university can be made directly to the Clearing process. Typically between 14,000 and 22,000 people use this route and recent patterns suggest around 20,000 additional applicants may apply directly to Clearing in 2014. Clearing applicants show some differences from applicants earlier in the cycle. Compared to earlier applicants, direct to Clearing applicants are more likely to be men, from England, older age groups and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Figure 1: Number of UCAS applicants from the direct to Clearing and main scheme application routes (2014 main scheme applicants indicated by reference line).



In 2013 UCAS placed 57,000 people through the Clearing process. The majority of these (42,000) were applicants who applied to courses well in advance of the June 30th deadline but did not have a place when exam results were known. But a growing share of people placed through Clearing (15,000 in 2013, around a quarter of the total) are new applicants who apply after June, directly to the Clearing process.

Over recent cycles the number of direct to Clearing applicants has ranged from 14,000 (in 2006) to 22,000 (in 2013). In most cycles there are between 29 and 35 Clearing applicants for every 1,000 applicants who apply by the June deadline ('main scheme' applicants). The 2010 and 2011 cycles were exceptions to this, with around 25 Clearing applicants for every 1,000 main scheme applicants. In 2014, there are 659,030 main scheme applicants suggesting around 21,000 (between 19,000 and 23,000) would be expected from the patterns in most years, but if 2014 is more like 2010 or 2011 there would be fewer (around 16,000).

In previous cycles Clearing applicants have differed in some ways from main scheme applicants. In particular, there are more older than younger Clearing applicants, the opposite pattern to main scheme applicants. In 2013, 58 per cent of Clearing applicants were aged 21 or older, compared to 24 per cent of main scheme applicants.

Just over half of Clearing applicants are men (51 per cent), whereas women are in the majority (57 per cent) amongst main scheme applicants. Applicants from England are a larger share (82 per cent) of Clearing applicants than main scheme applicants (69 per cent). Most Clearing and main scheme applicants come from advantaged backgrounds but Clearing applicants are more likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds (33 per cent) than main scheme applicants (27 per cent).

Technical notes

1. The main UCAS application scheme, where applicants can apply for up to five courses, opens in September of each year and closes to new applications on 30 June the following year. New applicants after this point apply directly into the Clearing process where they usually make one application once they have found a place. Applicants placed through the Clearing process include both main scheme applicants and direct to Clearing applicants. Around 10 per cent of acceptances are through the Clearing process with the number of applicants placed by the end of the cycle through the Clearing process increasing from 38,000 in 2006 to 57,000 in 2013. The number of applicants that apply direct to Clearing that are placed by the end of the cycle increased by 20 per cent proportionally in 2013, to nearly 15,000. The number of main scheme applicants placed through Clearing fell by 3 per cent proportionally in 2013, to just over 42,000.
2. Applicant age is defined relative to cut off points for school and college cohorts within the different administrations of the UK. For England and Wales, ages are defined on the 31 August, for Northern Ireland on the 1 July and for Scotland on the 28 February the following year. For applicants from outside the UK age on 31 August is used.
3. The POLAR2 classification developed by HEFCE classifies small areas across the UK into five groups according to their level of young participation in HE. Each of these groups represents around 20 per cent of young people and is ranked from quintile 1 (areas with the lowest young participation rates, considered as the most disadvantaged) to quintile 5 (highest young participation rates, considered most advantaged).
4. A data file for the data points shown in Figure 1 is available with this analysis note at <http://www.ucas.com/data-analysis>.
5. 2013 direct to Clearing and main scheme applicants are shown for selected categories in Table 1.

Table 1: Direct to Clearing and main scheme applicants in 2013

Type of applicant (all applicants)		Applicants		Proportion	
		Clearing	Main scheme	Clearing	Main scheme
Age	18 & under	2,550	304,430	12%	48%
	19	3,610	128,180	16%	20%
	20	2,980	51,350	14%	8%
	21+	12,810	151,810	58%	24%
Sex	Men	11,180	274,570	51%	43%
	Women	10,770	361,210	49%	57%
Country of domicile	England	18,080	441,760	82%	69%
	Northern Ireland	220	20,290	1%	3%
	Scotland	510	42,930	2%	7%
	Wales	800	22,660	4%	4%
	EU	810	43,270	4%	7%
	Overseas	1,550	64,860	7%	10%

Type of applicant (UK domiciled 18 and 19 year olds)		Applicants		Proportion	
		Clearing	Main scheme	Clearing	Main scheme
POLAR2	Quintile 1	710	40,740	14%	11%
	Quintile 2	960	57,090	19%	16%
	Quintile 3	1,110	70,030	21%	19%
	Quintile 4	1,130	84,430	22%	23%
	Quintile 5	1,240	107,410	24%	30%