



Contextual Admissions

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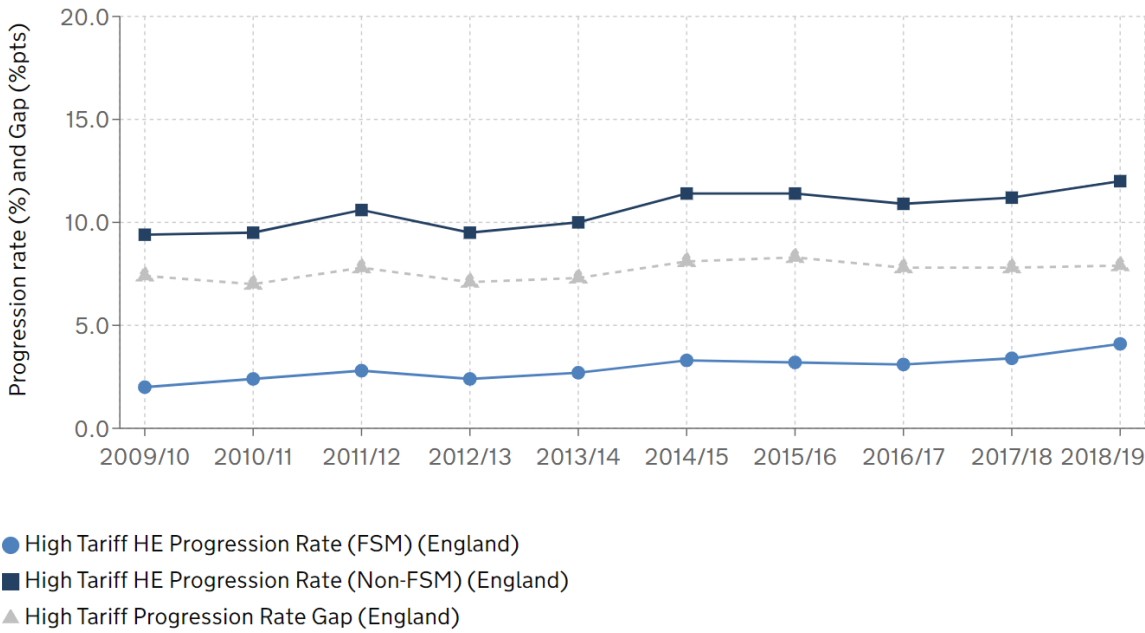
What is Widening Participation?

- WP has traditionally been about supporting underrepresented groups to progress to university, though more recently success whilst at university (and afterwards) is considered to be equally important
- There are many different groups of people who take up a disproportionately small number of university places. These groups include:
 - Students from a poorer family background
 - Students who have been in care
 - Students with disabilities

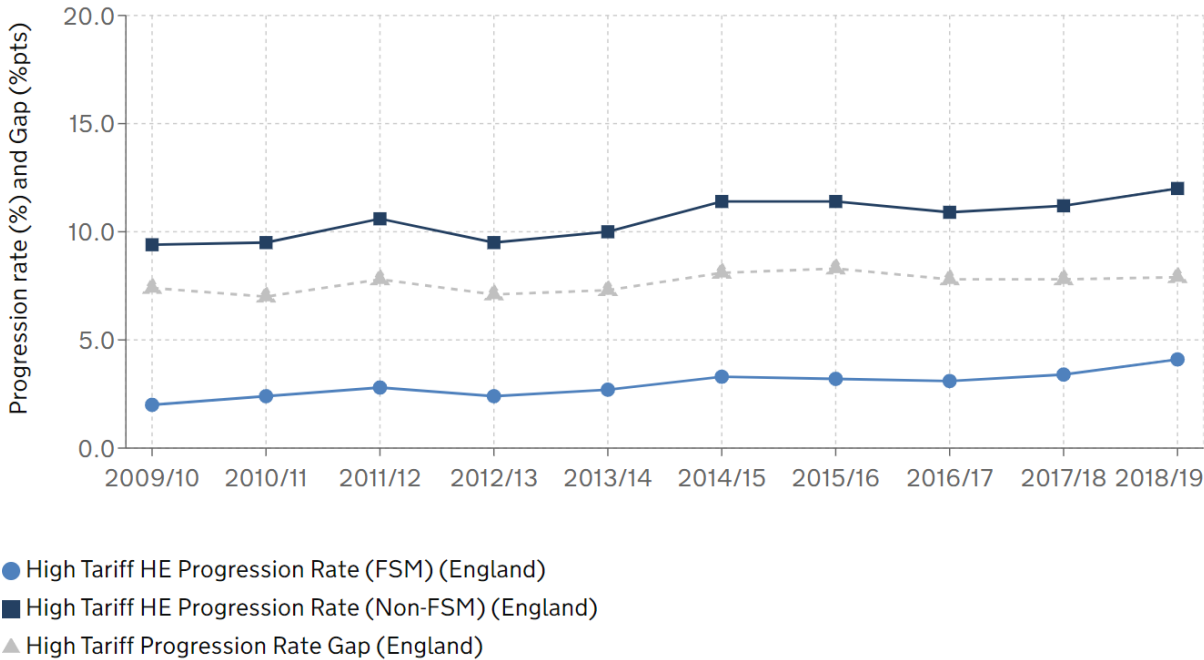


Widening Participation in Higher Education

Progression to high tariff HE by age 19 by Free School Meal Status



Progression to high tariff HE by age 19 by Free School Meal Status



Measures of disadvantage

Schools – Pupil Premium

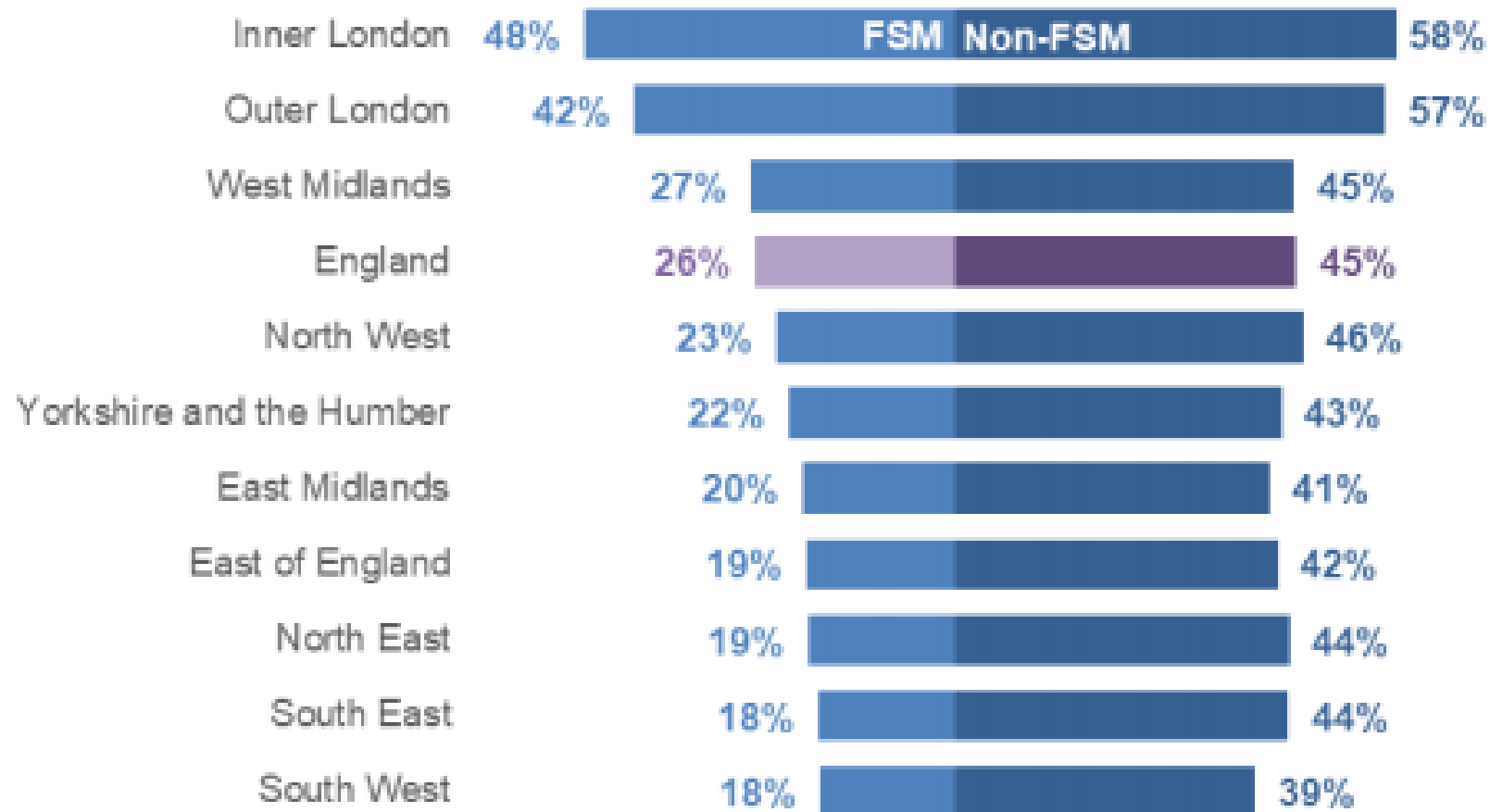
- Free school meals (Ever 6)
- Adopted from care/care leavers
- Service child (Ever 6)

Universities - POLAR

- Geographical – looks at participation rate in the census ward in which the pupil lives
- These kind of geographical measures tend to correlate with socioeconomic background

This is where is can get confusing?

Regional variation in university access



Source: Department for Education (2019)

Contextual Admissions Processes



The Process



Personal
details



Academic
profile



Personal
statement



Teacher
reference



Contextual Admissions

- Contextual admissions” practices involve using the same factors as in the traditional process but with some extra factors included to build up a more holistic picture of a candidate
- Contextual admissions are not new, they have been used to a varying extent for at least 15 years but the use of them is becoming increasingly common
- Each university has the freedom to make its own judgment about their own contextual admissions policy, and research and debate around these policies is ongoing



Contextual Offers

Durham's Contextual Offer

To be eligible for a contextual offer you must meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Your home address postcode is classified as Quintile 1 or 2 of POLAR4 [LPN](#)*
- Your home address postcode is classified as [ACORN](#) 4 or 5
- Your current or most recently attended school is classified as a UK state school
- You are in receipt of free school meals

Contextual offers at Durham lower the grade requirements for entry





Other Contextual Offers might determine:

- Whether an applicant receives an offer
- The grades asked for in a conditional offer
- Whether to invite a candidate for an interview
- Entitlement for scholarships and bursaries
- Entitlement to apply to certain courses (e.g. foundation years)
- Whether to provide further consideration at clearing / prioritisation for near misses

A silver MacBook Air laptop is open on a wooden desk. The screen displays a web browser with a document titled 'PRODUCTION' and some text. A large blue semi-transparent overlay covers the right side of the image, containing white text and a bulleted list. The laptop's keyboard and trackpad are visible.

Support your students by:

- Encouraging them to start thinking about taking part in outreach activity at an early stage (end of Year 11 onwards)
- Making sure students factor in potential grade reductions when making their five UCAS choices
- Informing students they can mention contextual information in their personal statement
- Teachers can corroborate this in the reference, and provide contextual information about the school too
- Use the [POLAR postcode checker](#)



Any questions?
dur.ac.uk/study/askus



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