

Summary of Business for
College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee



Title	Equal Opportunities; an analysis of undergraduate student performance for cohorts entering the College between 2008 and 2012
Author/ Comments	Jonathan Pymm
Date	11 December 2013
Status	Freely Available
Document type	For Discussion
Summary	<i>See attached</i>
Paper referred from	-
Recommendation	The Committee is consider the attached report and associated Appendix.

Equal Opportunities; an analysis of undergraduate student performance for cohorts entering the College between 2008 and 2012

Introduction and methodology

1. This paper draws together information on student population, achievement and progression, mainly gathered from data used for the annual review of undergraduate programmes. It seeks to examine trends relating to ethnicity, gender, disability and age; factors which are, or will be, implicated in equal opportunities legislation. Data are also examined relating to students' domicile (or, more accurately, their fee-region- UK, Other EU and Overseas) since Equal Opportunities could equally well be applicable to students coming from overseas.
2. Data was used covering five entry cohorts, 2008 to 2012. Comparison with national data is almost impossible since there is no freely available data relating gender, ethnicity and disability to student progression and achievement.
3. As with last year's report, and unlike the reports from previous years (CBEEC/07/49, CBEEC/08/60, CBEEC/09/68 and CBEEC/10/64), this reports draws on headcount data at College level. Hence there are no departmental data available but it also avoids double counting students as was the case prior to the report from last year.

Undergraduate student population and benchmark data

4. Proof of a fair admissions policy at RHUL is, largely, beyond the scope of this paper since most relevant information on applicants (*eg* declared ethnicity) is only provided by UCAS for successful candidates. One can instead monitor the student intake over time although if there is a consistent bias against one particular sort of applicant, this would not be picked up by such an analysis.
5. The percentage of non-white UG entrants remained stable at just above 30% for a number of years, until and including 2009. Following a perceptible fall (of nearly 5%) in this value in 2010, the number increased again in 2011 and 2012, with the latter year again showing non-white entrants at above 30% (see Appendix, Fig. 1).
6. Despite an increase in the number of overseas students in the past 10-15 years, UK entrants still comprise over 70 % of a typical UG cohort. Over the past 5 years the percentage of UK entrants has declined slightly from around 75% to 70% with the most notable decline in 2012. A corresponding growth in the proportion of overseas (non-EU) entrants was also seen between 2011 and 2012 (see Appendix, Fig. 2).
7. The proportion of 'mature' entrants (aged 22 or over upon initial enrolment, as defined by HESA) has remained remarkably steady over the past 5 cohorts at 6-7%, albeit with a perceptible drop in 2012 to 5.2% from 7.4% in 2011 (see Appendix, Fig. 3).

Analysis of student achievement related to ethnic origin and gender

8. It has been noted in previous analyses that there is a clear and consistent achievement gap between white and non-white students with regard to final classification, with the former up to twice as likely to be awarded a 1st class degree, and the latter more than twice as likely to be awarded a 2:2 or lower. The same trend can also be seen for students who completed in 2013, with the proportion of non-whites achieving a first class degree lower than ever (see Appendix, Fig. 4).
9. A few years ago it was noted that male students are more likely to be awarded a 1st class degree than female students; although for the past few years this trend appeared to have

swapped with females awarded more 1st class degrees than males. However, for those classified in 2013, the proportion of males and females achieving 1st class degrees is more or less equal. Female students are still more likely to be awarded a 2(i) compared to male students and male students are still more likely to be awarded a degree lower than a 2(i) compared to female students (see Appendix, Fig. 5).

Analysis of student progression related to ethnic origin, gender, age on entry and declared disability

10. In terms of student progression, typically 84% of 1st year students progress to stage two at the first attempt and 91% in total after 1 or 2 attempts (note that, for the sake of clarity, these percentages include all students who began the course although it should be noted that some withdraw before the first attempt is taken). Since the 1st year is where most students fail to progress, first-year progression at the 1st attempt will be the measure used for comparisons in this paper.
11. Considering 1st year progression, white students are *ca* 10% more likely to progress at the first attempt compared to non-white students. The performance gap in 2009 was the lowest seen in the last 5 years (8%) while students who entered in 2010 showed the highest performance gap (14%). Following this increase in 2010 the gap for students who entered in 2011 has decreased back down to 10% in 2011 and 12% in 2012 (see Appendix, Fig. 6).
12. There are some differences in 1st year progression between male and female students at the first attempt although they are much smaller than those noted between white and non-white students (*ca* 4-7%). The percentage of both male and female students progressing from the 1st year at the first attempt has remained largely constant over the past 5 years, albeit with a slight drop in male progression rates over the past 2 years (see Appendix, Fig. 7).
13. The progression rate for disabled students between 2008 and 2011 was slightly lower than that for non-disabled students. This trend was reversed in 2012 when there were 8% more disabled students progressing to the 2nd year at the first attempt than non-disabled students (see Appendix, Fig. 8). It should be noted that disabled students comprised a smaller population in 2012 entry (6%) than in previous years (the highest was in 2008 when 11% of the population were classed as having some form of disability).
14. 1st year progression rates of mature students continue to be lower than those seen for non-mature students by around 15%. The proportion of mature students progressing has declined over the past 2 years (see Appendix, Fig. 9).

Jonathan Pymm
Strategic Development Manager
15 October 2013

APPENDIX

This Appendix contains tables and figures relating to the main paper.

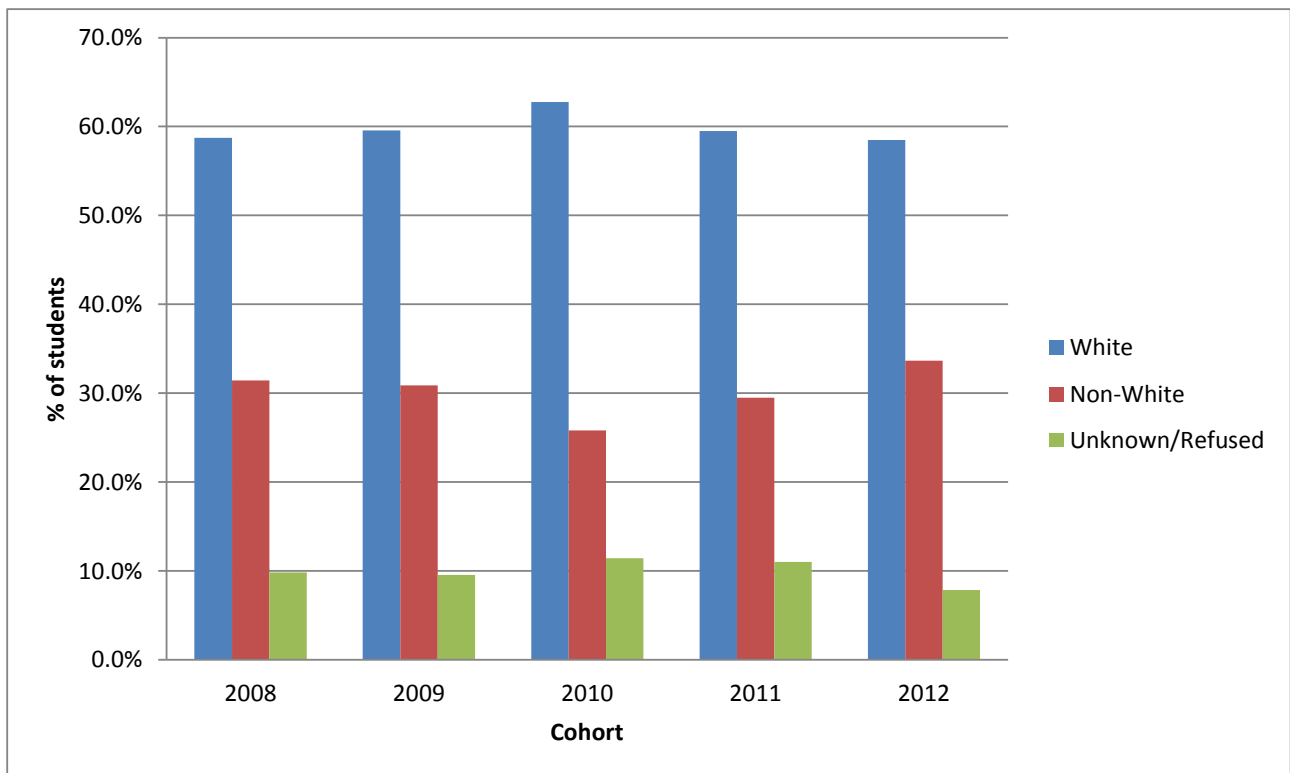


Fig. 1: Percentage of entrants by declared ethnicity and cohort, 2008-2012.

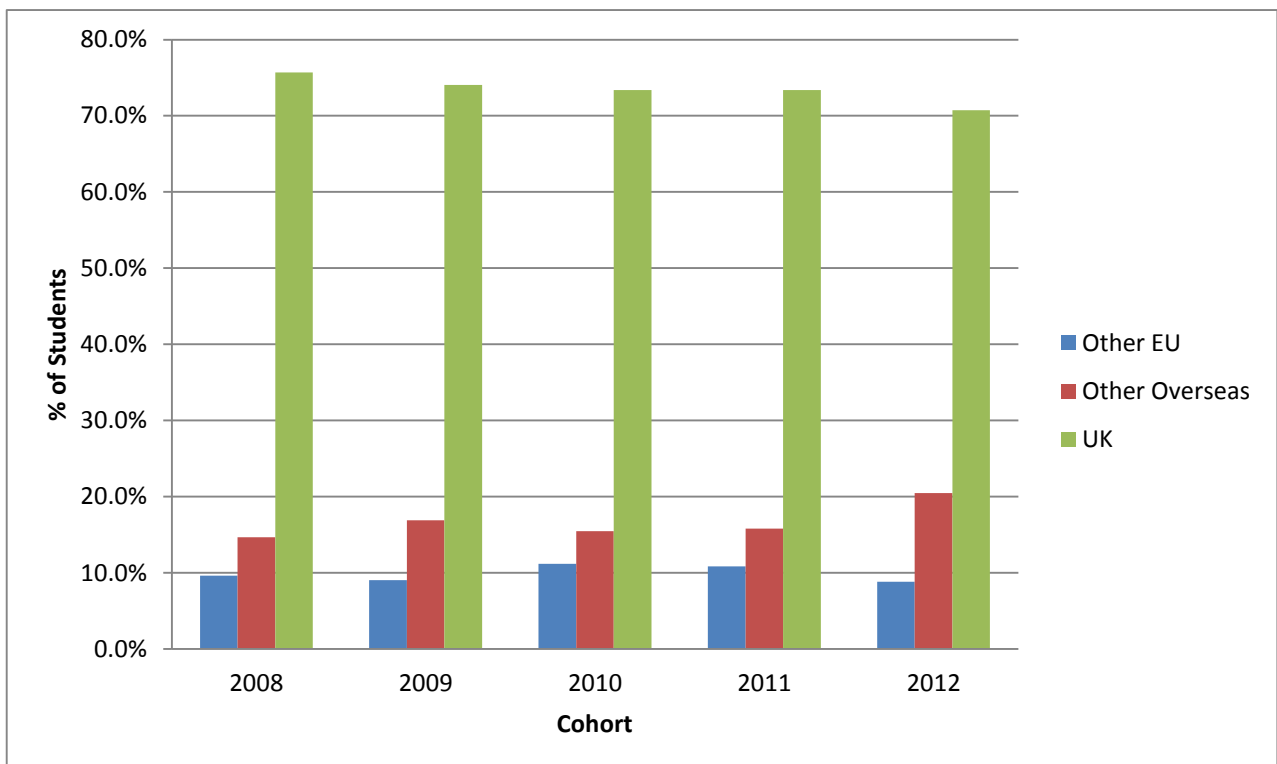


Fig. 2: Percentage of entrants by fee-region and cohort, 2008-2012.

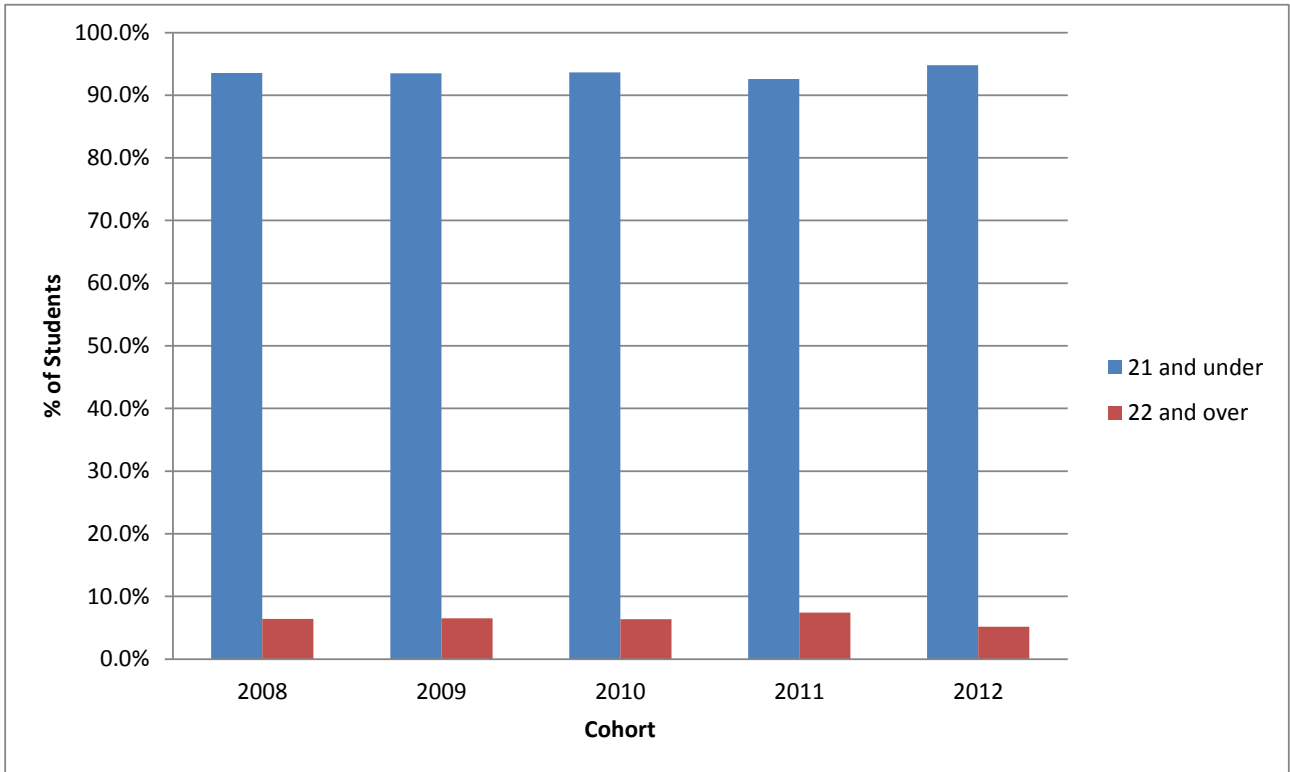


Fig. 3: Percentage of mature entrants by cohort, 2008-2012.

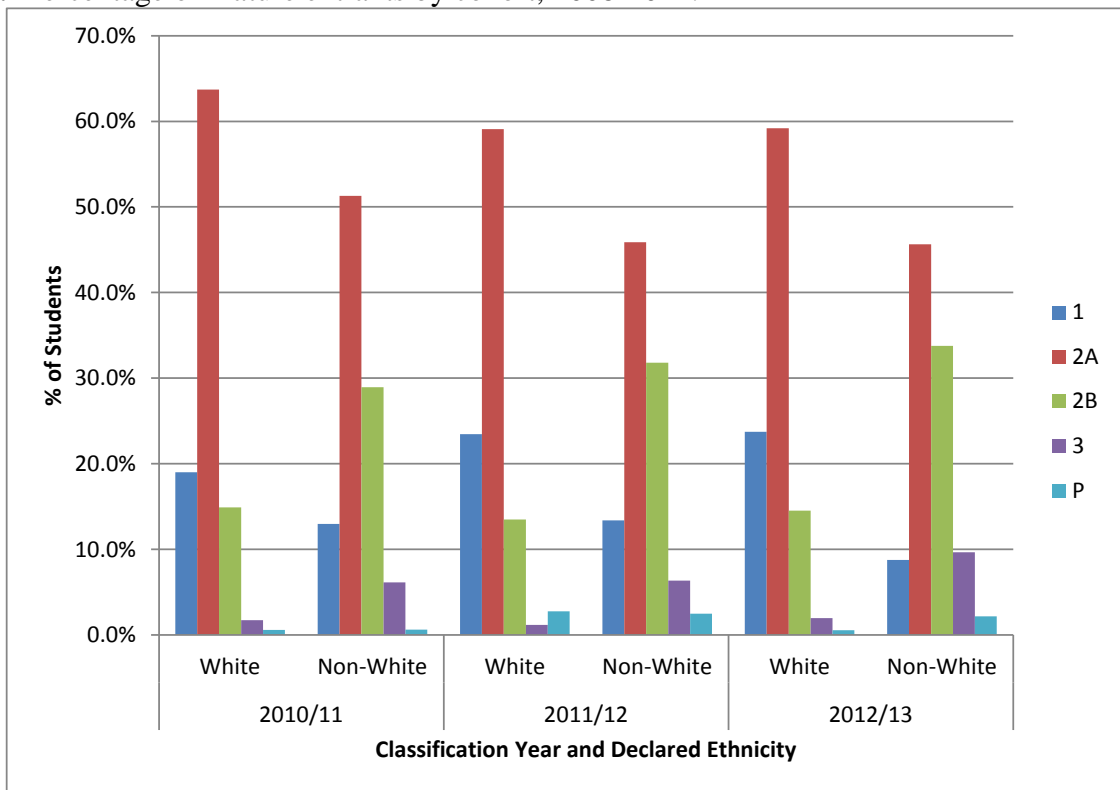


Fig. 4: Classification profiles by year of completion, 2010-2013, and declared ethnicity. Students who failed to declare their ethnicity are excluded.

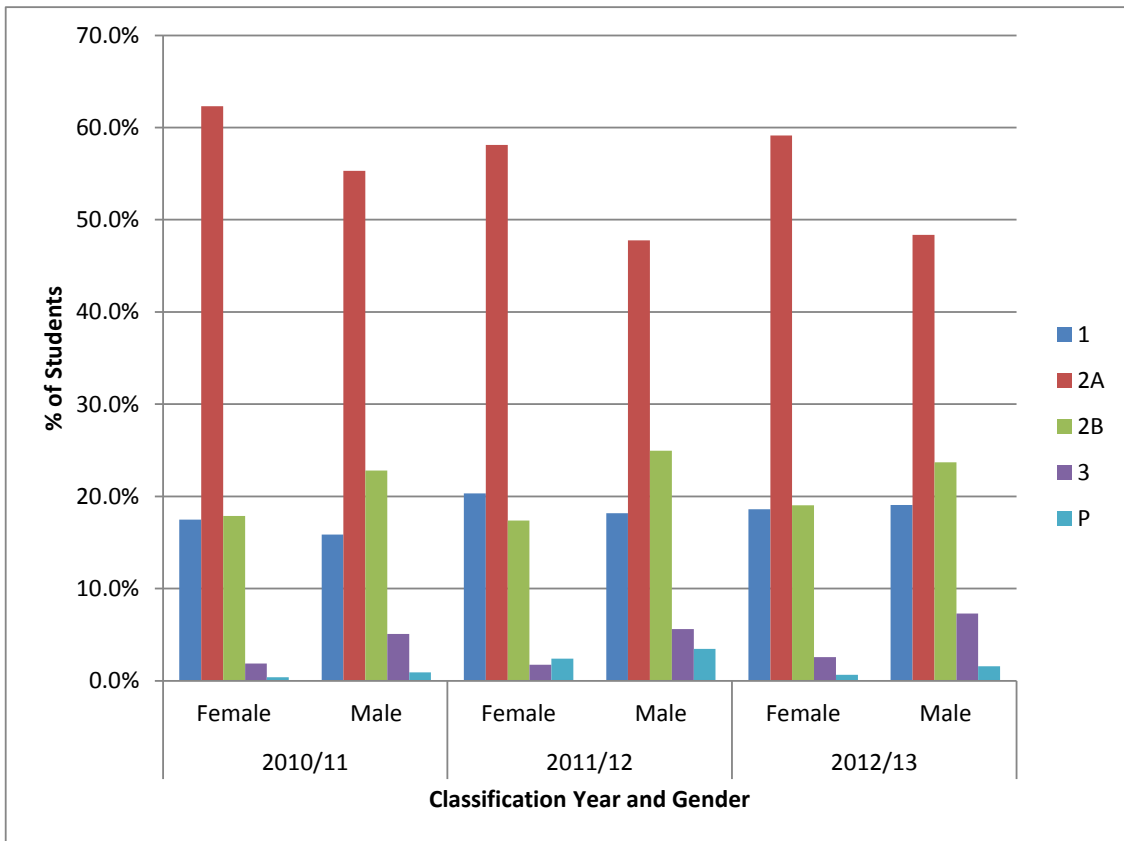


Fig. 5: Classification profiles by year of completion, 2010-2013, and gender.

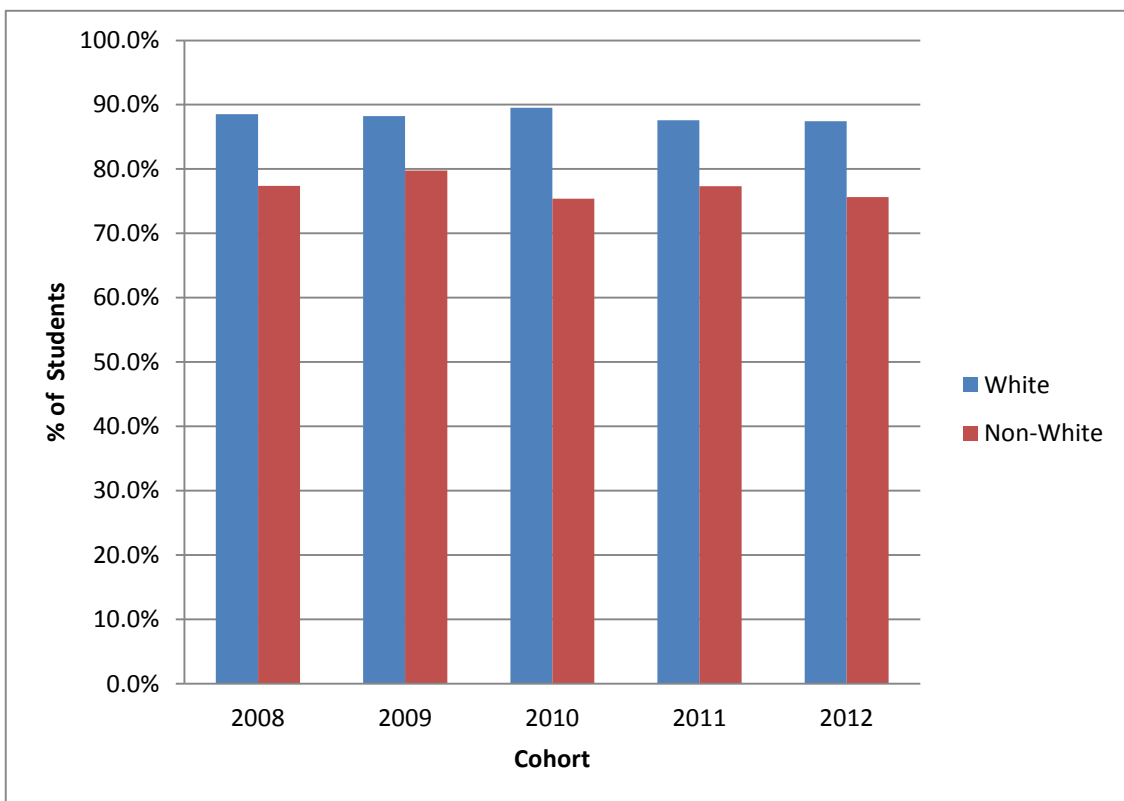


Fig. 6: 1st year progression rates at the first attempt by ethnicity and cohort, 2008-2012. Students who failed to declare their ethnicity are excluded.

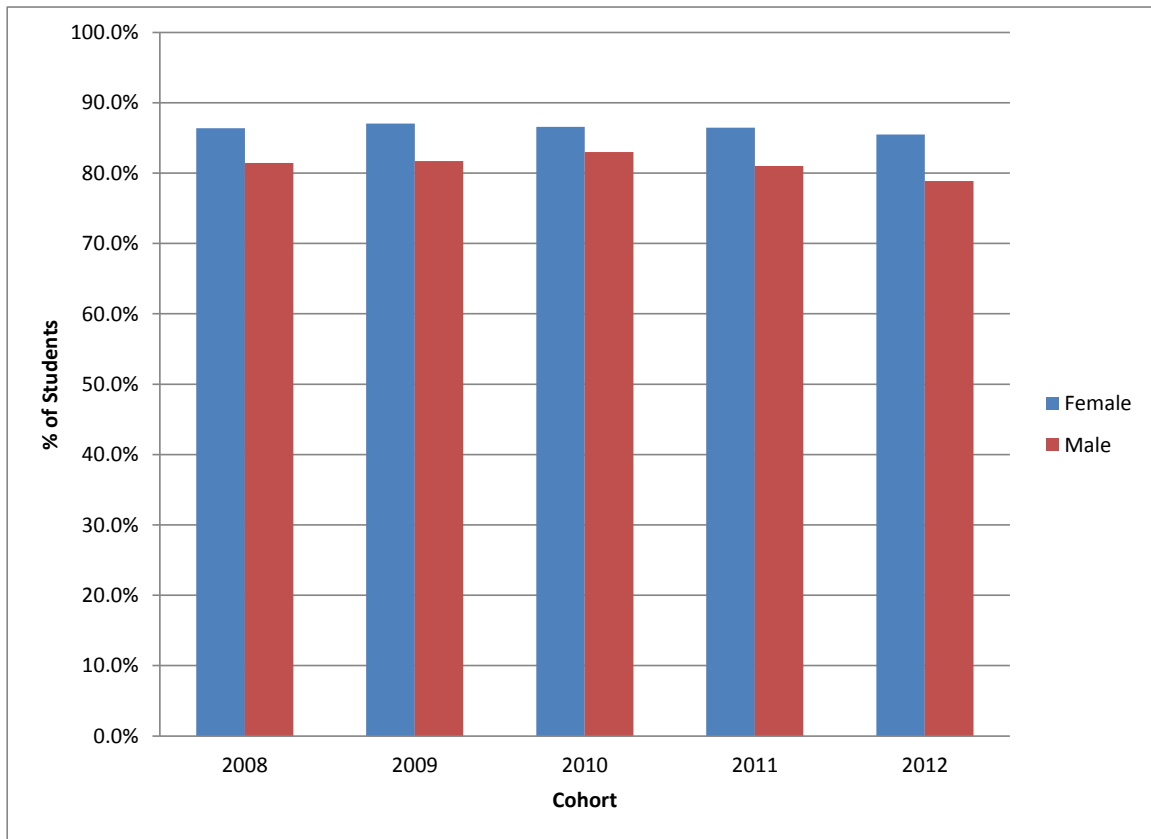


Fig. 7: 1st year progression rates at the first attempt by gender and cohort, 2008-2012.

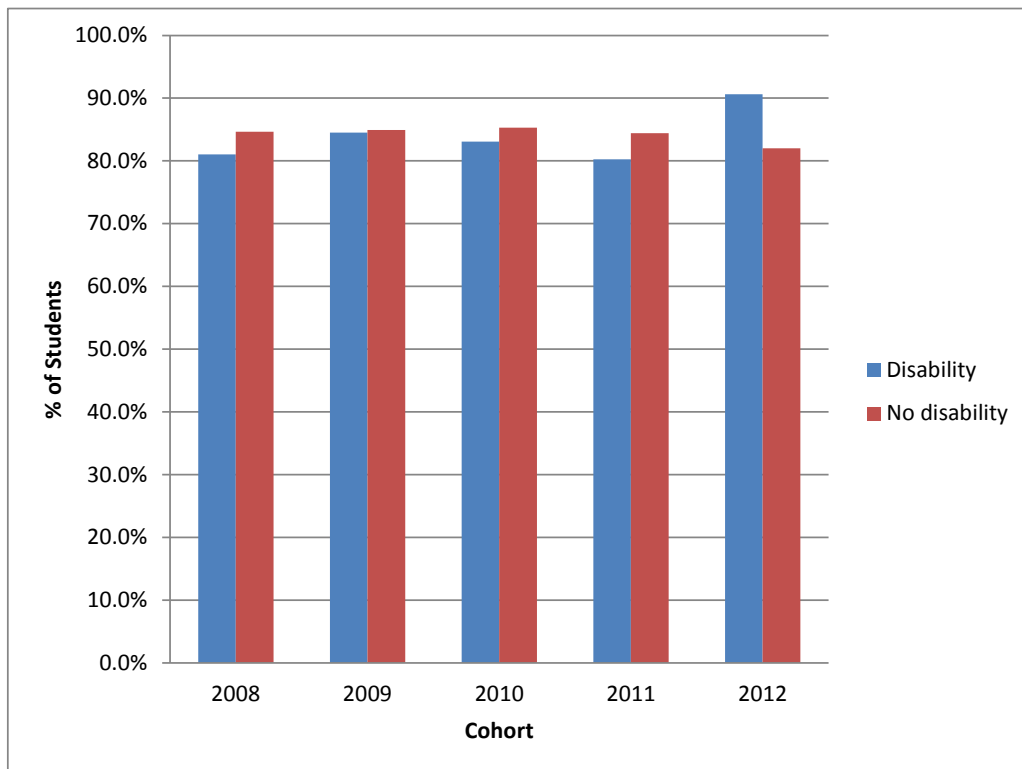


Fig. 8: 1st year progression rates at the first attempt of students with a declared disability by cohort, 2008-2012.

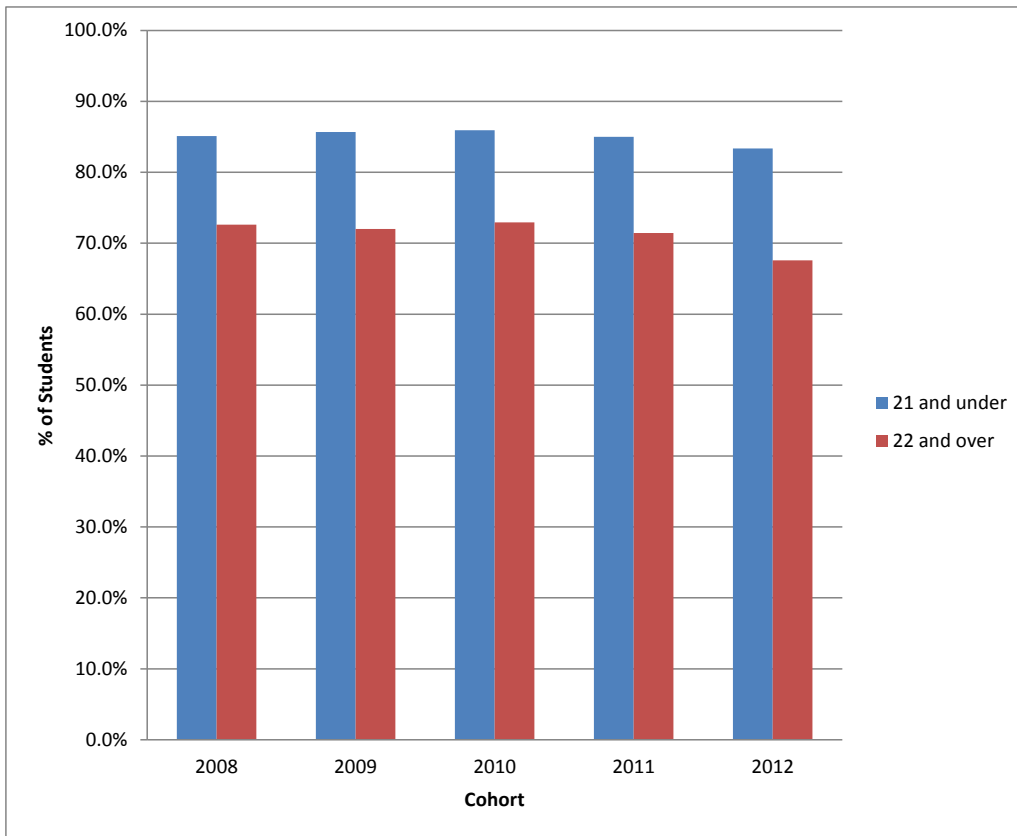


Fig. 9: 1st year progression rates at the first attempt by age on entry and cohort, 2008-2012.