



Access & widening participation student numbers & trends 2018/19 – 2023/24

Access & Participation @ UL

The University of Limerick (UL) is dedicated to expanding educational opportunities and is actively pursuing the objectives outlined in its UL @ 50 Strategic Plan and the [National Access Plan 2022 - 2028](#). UL is committed to increasing the participation and success of students and communities that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Through a variety of Access Entry routes, UL collaborates with educational providers, organisations, and communities to support these students in gaining entry to the university. Once enrolled, UL students benefit from a range of supports designed to ease their transition to university life and to develop the skills needed to thrive both academically and beyond their time at university.

As part of the System Performance Framework 2023–2028: Performance Agreement between UL and the Higher Education Authority, UL has set a range of targets to increase enrolment, progression and completion rates for students from under-represented communities. The following slides focus on our Access Pathway data, which includes priority groups from the NAP.

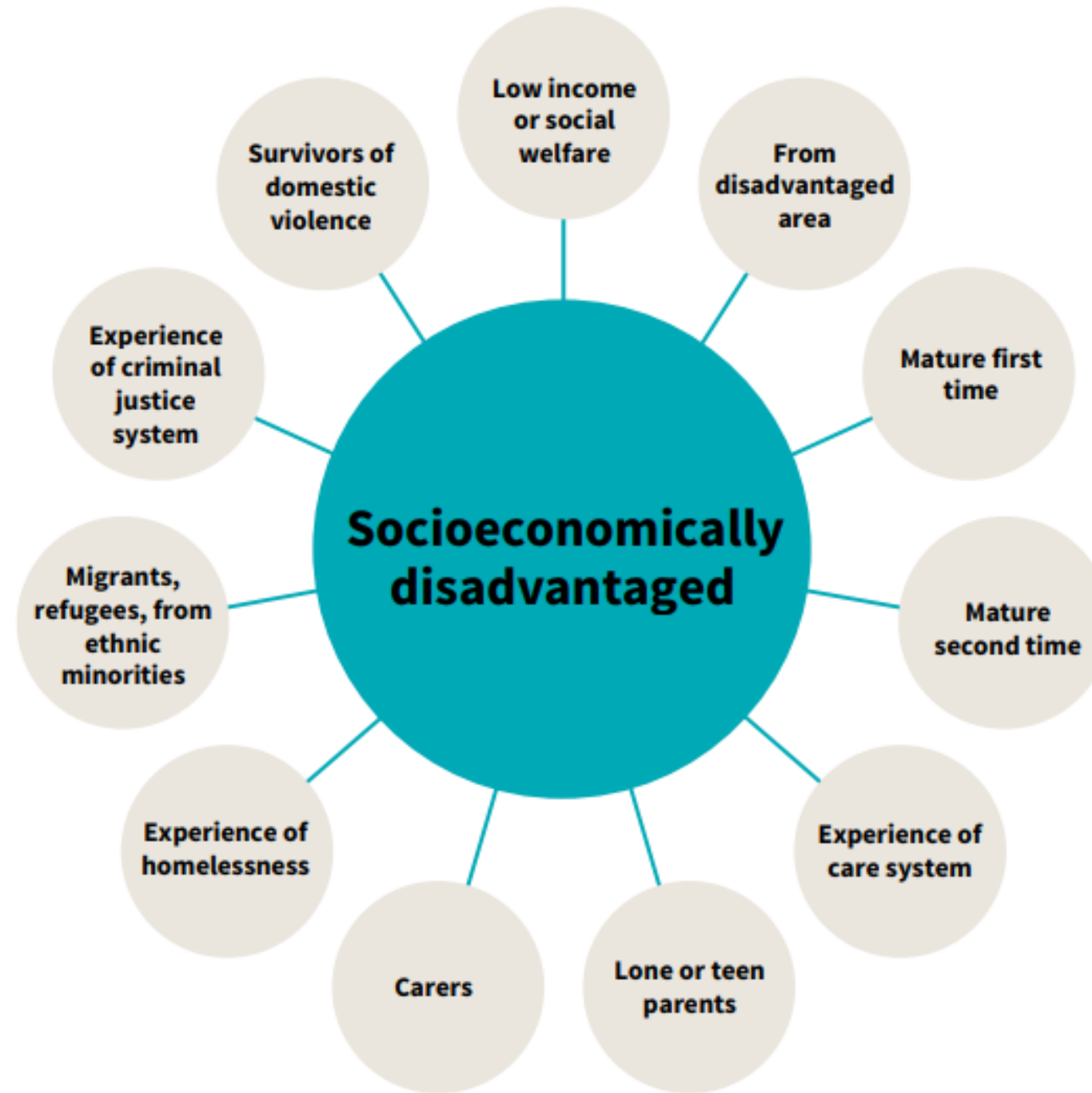
Priority groups

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graph TD; A[Priority groups] --- B[Students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged (see Fig. 1)]; A --- C[Students who are members of Irish Traveller and Roma communities]; A --- D[Students with disabilities including intellectual disabilities];
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Students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged (see Fig. 1)

Students who are members of Irish Traveller and Roma communities

Students with disabilities including intellectual disabilities



NAP Socioeconomically disadvantaged sub-groups

Our Access Pathways

DARE: Disability Access Route to Education is a third level admissions scheme for students from non-traditional learning backgrounds, including students with a disability.

HEAR: The Higher Education Access Route is a third level admissions scheme for school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Matures Students: A mature student is someone who is 23 years of age or older by 1st January in the calendar year of proposed entry to an undergraduate course.

FET/QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) / Further Education and Training (FET) entry routes are designed for students coming through level 5 or level 6 courses from Colleges of Further Education and are seeking a level 8 course.

Access & Participation @ UL

Key Highlights

- In 2023/24, 19.8% of new entrant enrolments at UL are students via access pathways.
- In 2023/24, 2173 student enrolments were via access pathways.
- In 2023/24 the progression rate of students via access pathways is 92.2%.
- In 2023/24, 353 UL students who entered via access pathways graduated
- In 2023/24, 90% of students who entered UL via access pathways achieved an honours degree or higher.

New Entrant Access Route 2018/19 – 2023/24

6 Year Access Entry Route Pathway Overview												
Year	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
No. New Entrant Students	2445		2747		3028		2912		2980		3,195	
DARE	156	6.4%	173	6.3%	224	7.4%	227	7.8%	188	6.3%	275	8.60%
HEAR	191	7.8%	209	7.6%	200	6.6%	163	5.6%	164	5.5%	179	5.60%
Mature Students	112	4.6%	129	4.7%	103	3.4%	108	3.7%	66	2.2%	86	2.70%
FET/QQI	59	2.4%	44	1.6%	61	2.0%	52	1.8%	66	2.2%	93	2.90%
Total Access Pathway	518	21.2%	555	20.2%	588	19.4%	550	18.9%	484	16.2%	633	19.80%

*Data Source – HEA

[Key Facts and Figures | Statistics | Higher Education Authority](#)

DARE Pathway Key Highlights

In 2023/24, 8.6% of new entrant enrolments at UL are DARE students.

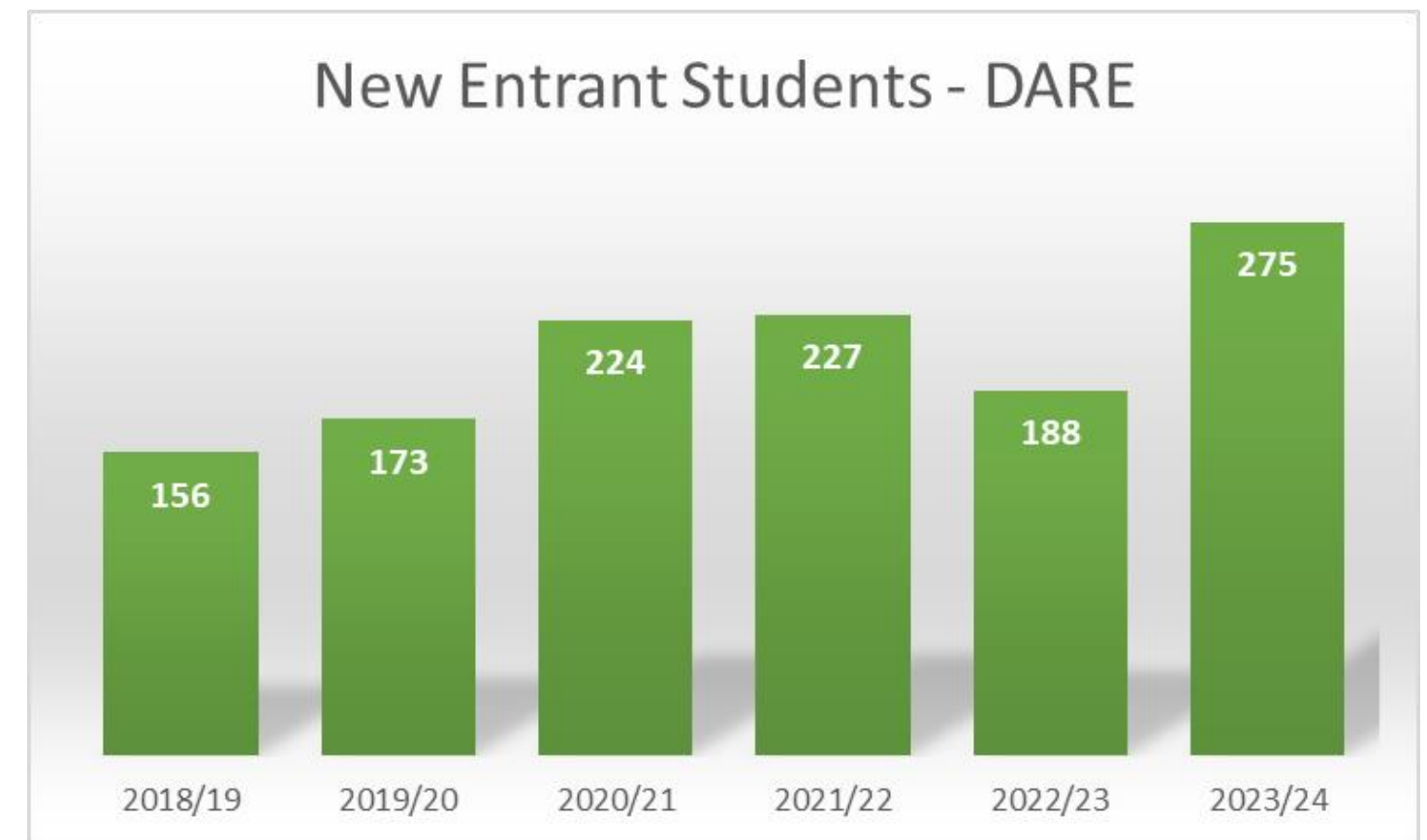
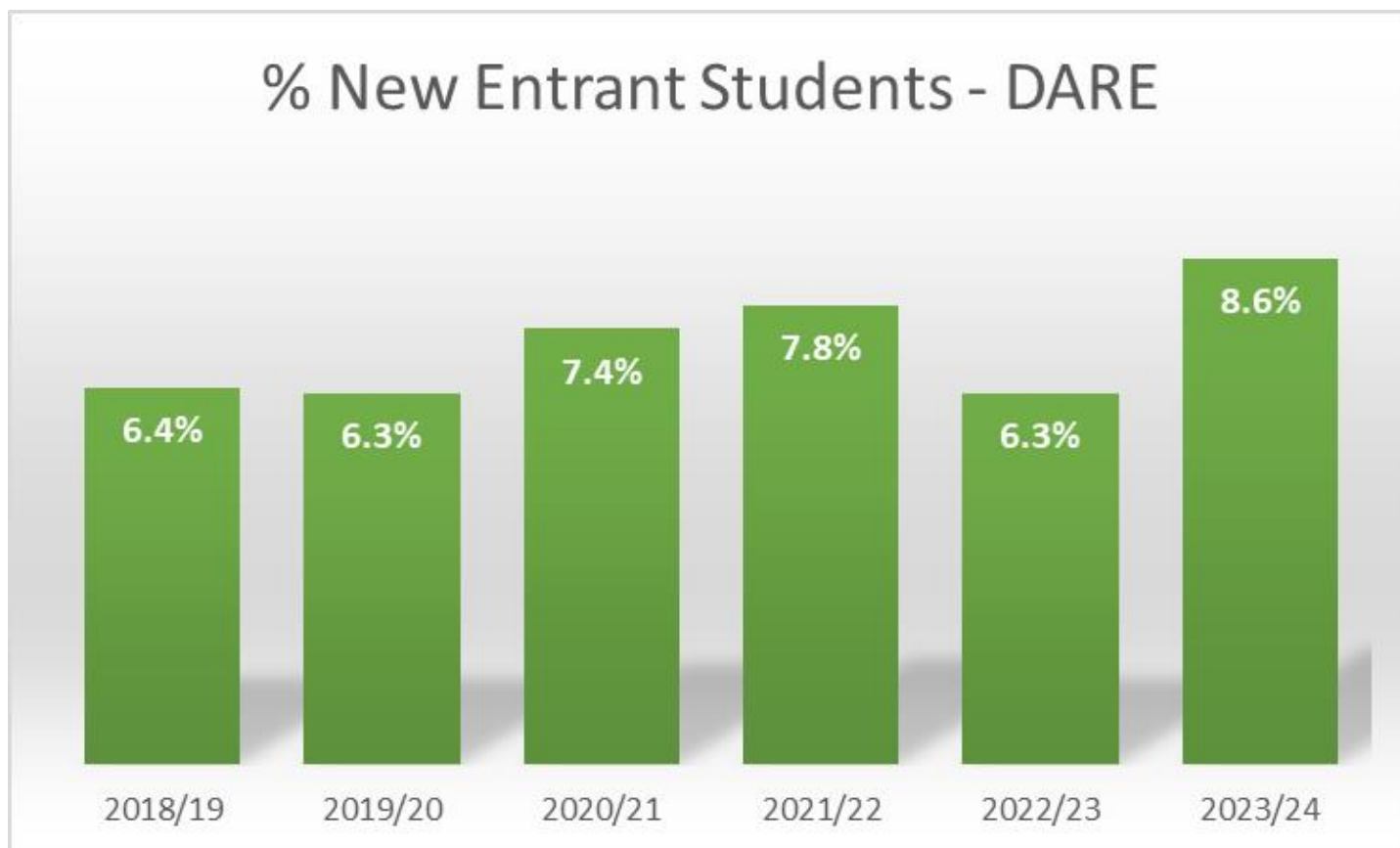


In 2023/24, the progression rate of DARE students is 92.9%.



In 2023/24, 144 DARE students graduated, and 91% of students achieved an honours degree or higher.

New Entrant DARE Access Route 2018/19 – 2023/24



HEAR/AUC Pathway Key Highlights

In 2023/24, 5.6% of new entrant enrolments at UL are HEAR/AUC students (from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds).

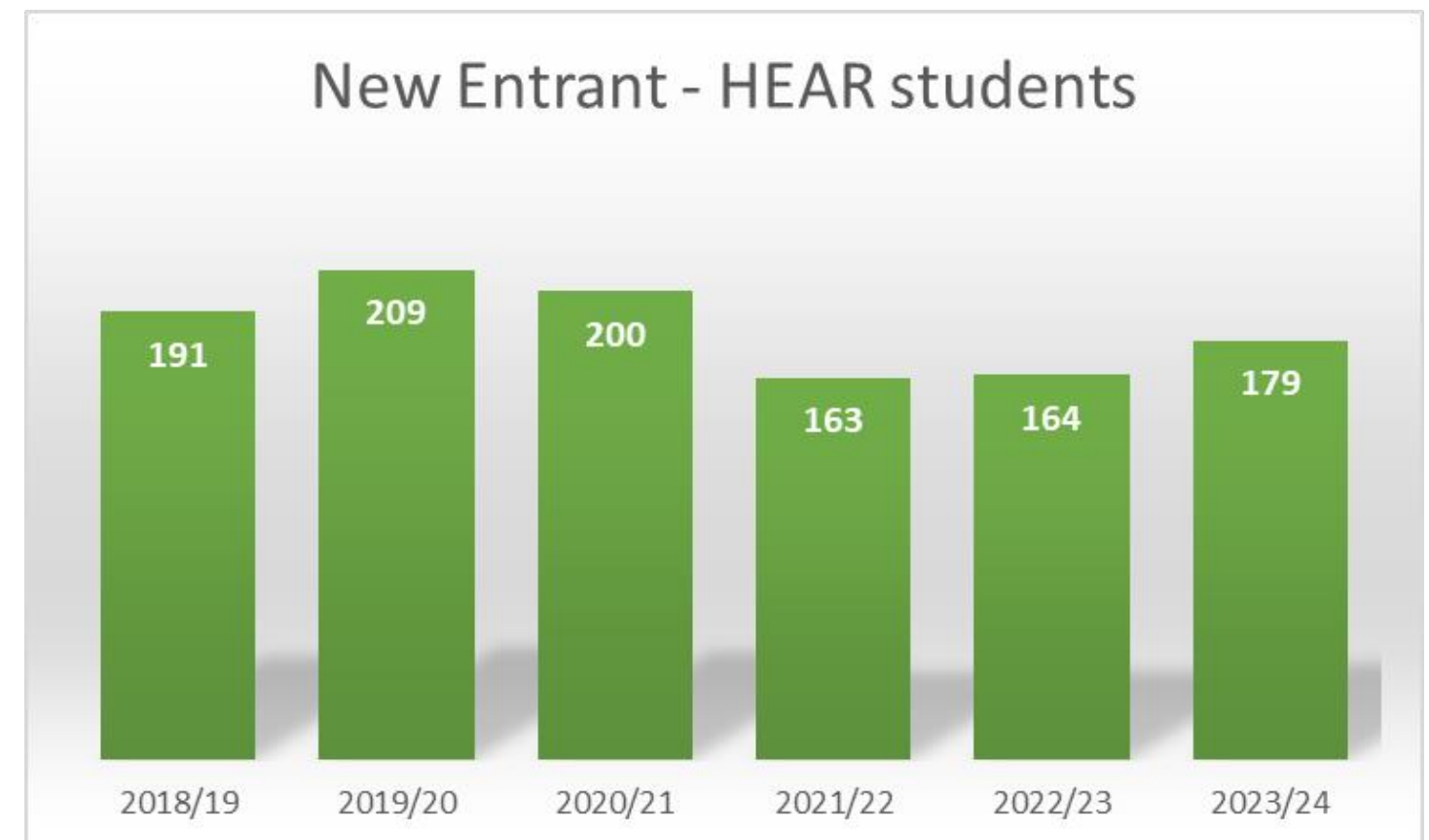
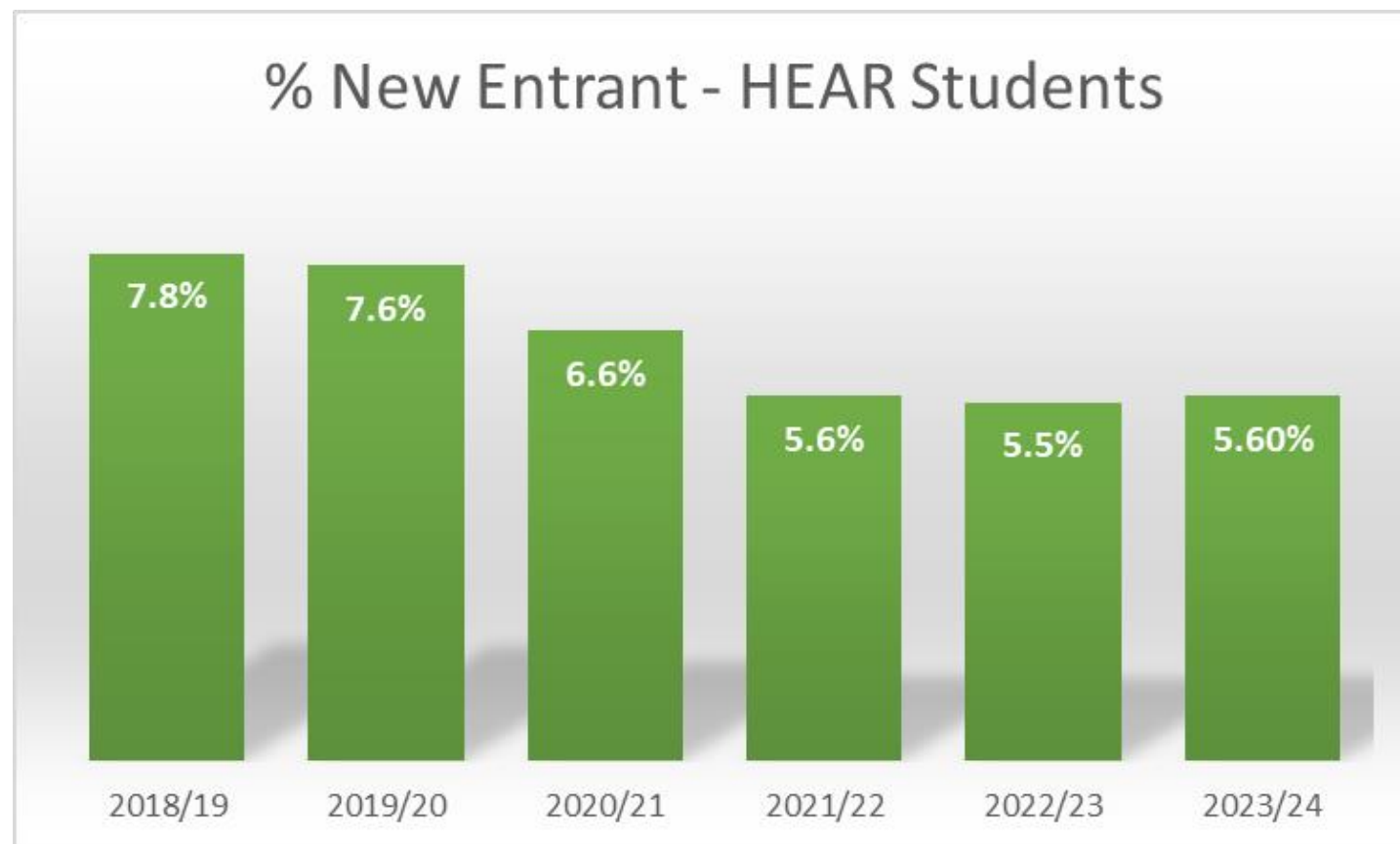


In 2023/24, the progression rate of HEAR/AUC students is 92.9%.



In 2023/24, 121 HEAR/AUC students graduated, and 87% of students achieved an honours degree or higher.

New Entrants HEAR Access Route 2018/19 – 2023/24



Mature Student Pathway Key Highlights

In 2023/24, 2.7% of new entrant enrolments at UL are Mature students.

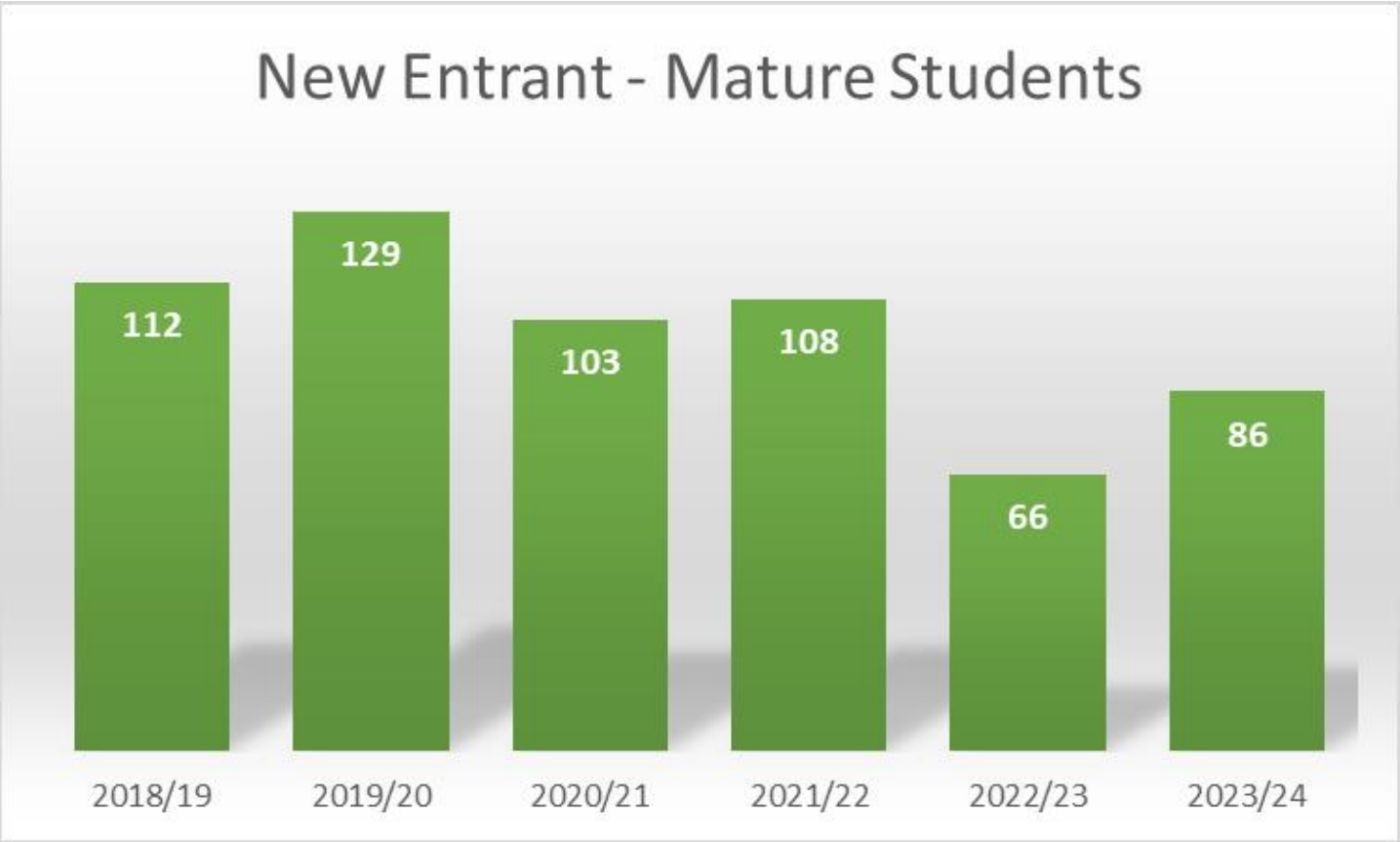
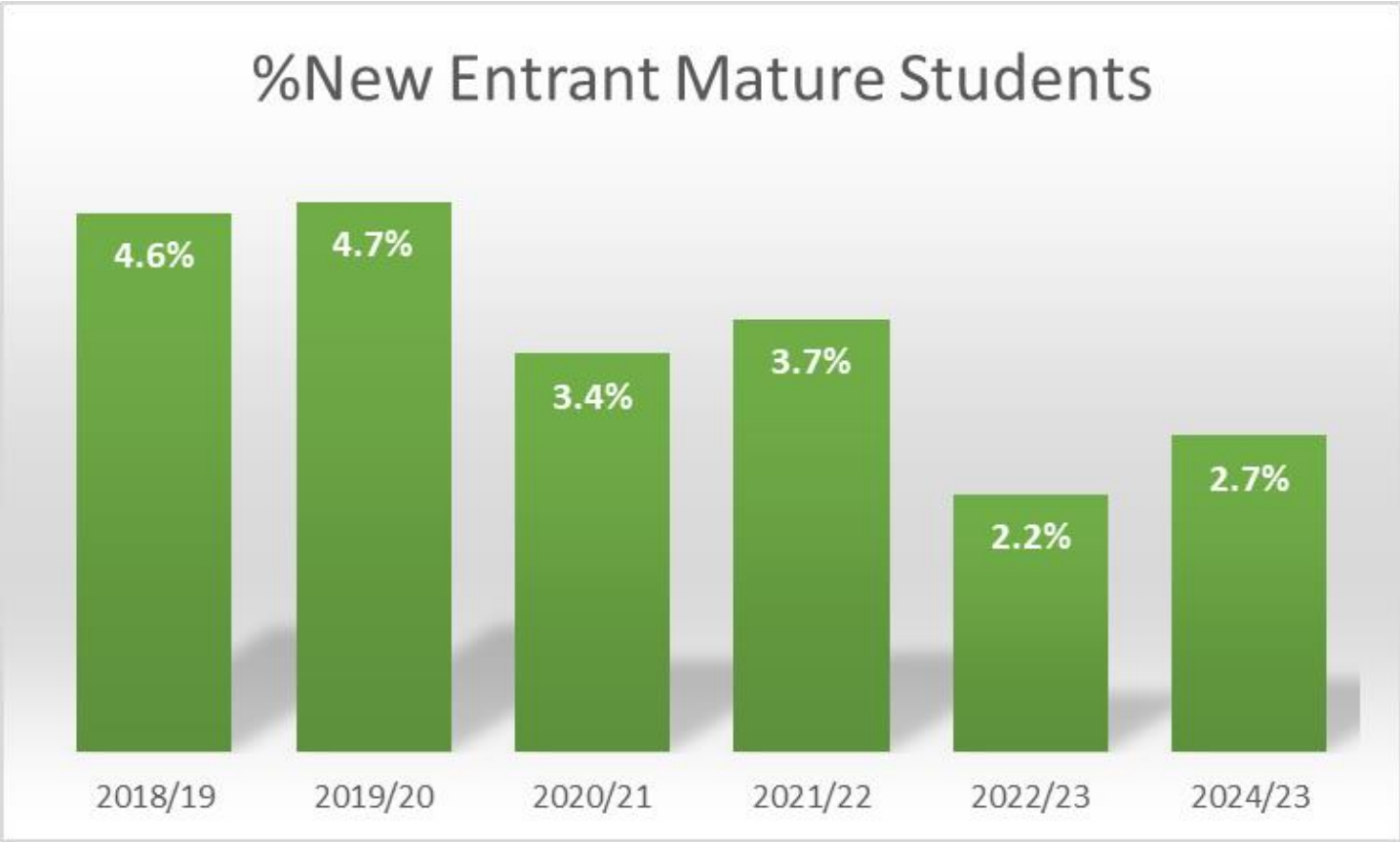


In 2023/24, the progression rate of Mature students is 89.5%.



In 2023/24, 55 Mature students graduated, and 97% of students achieved an honours degree or higher.

New Entrants Mature Students Access Route 2018/19 – 2023/24



FET/QQI Pathway Key Highlights

In 2023/24, 2.9% of new entrant enrolments at UL are FET/QQI pathway students .

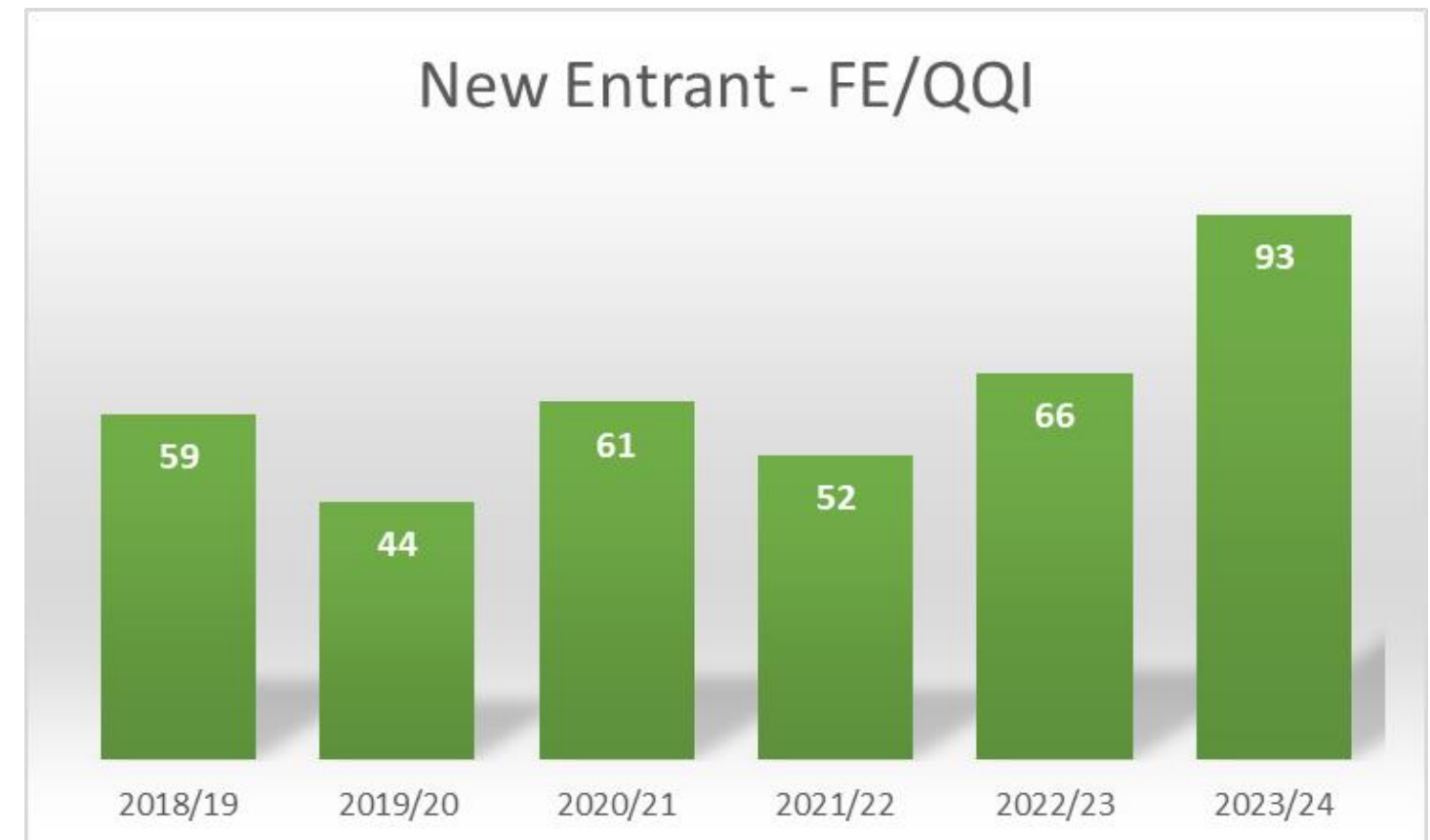
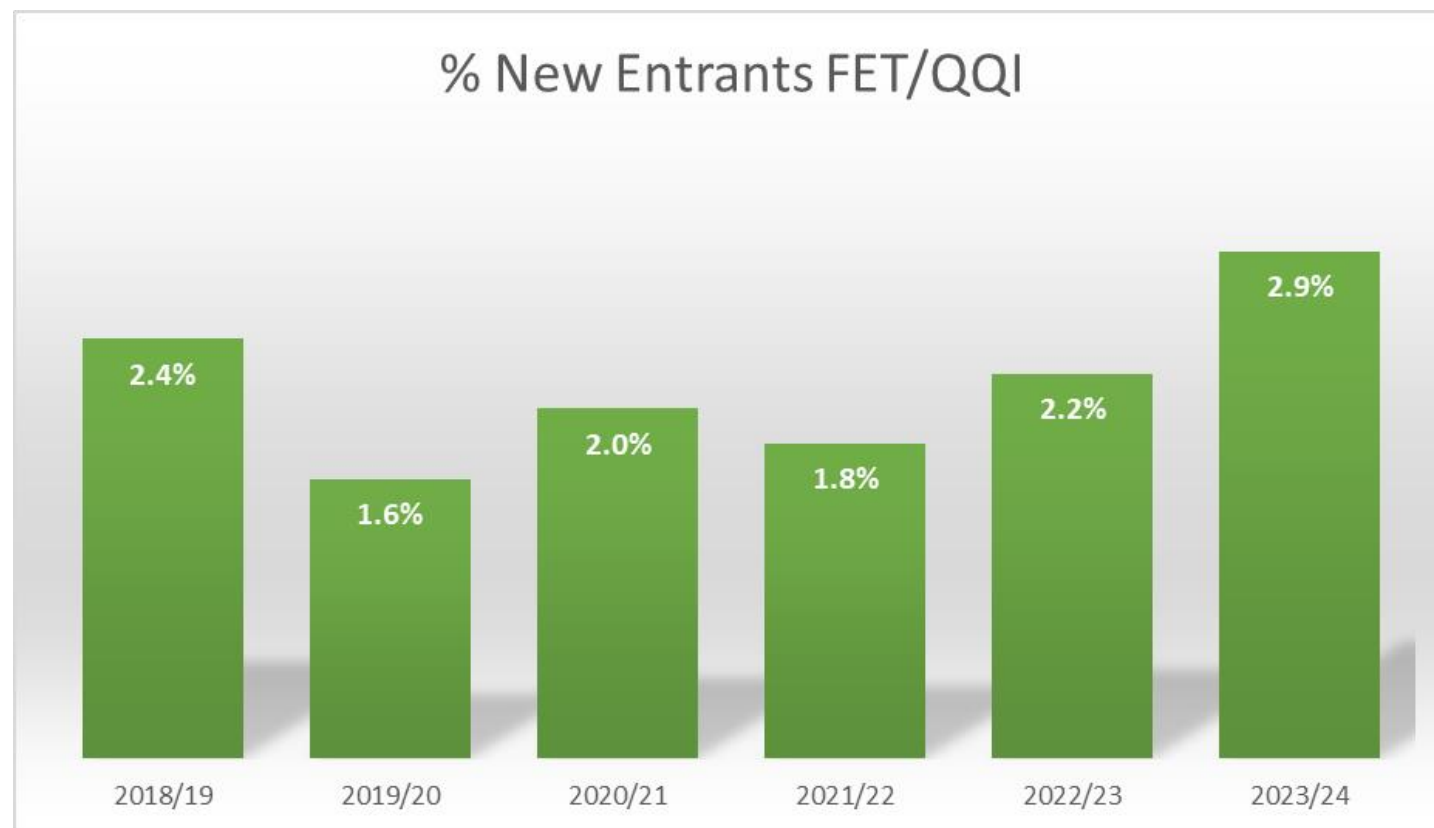


In 2023/24, the progression rate of FET/QQI pathway students is 92.3%.



In 2023/24, 33 FET/QQI students graduated, and 91% of students achieved an honours degree or higher.

New Entrants FET/QQI Access Route 2018/19 – 2023/24



Data Sources

HEA - [Key Facts and Figures](#)
[| Statistics](#) | [Higher
Education Authority](#)

Internal SRS - course
dashboard