

Social work education in England 2009 - 2014

A report for the Department of Health (DH)

March 2015

Contents

Introduction	3
1. Enrolments	4
<i>Interim summary: Enrolments</i>	10
2. Course outcomes: Qualifying students	11
3. Course outcomes: Classification of grades	17
<i>Interim summary: Course outcomes</i>	24
4. Attrition rates	25
<i>Interim summary: Attrition rates</i>	31
5. Destination of leavers	32
<i>Interim summary: Destination of leavers</i>	44
Summary	45

Introduction

This report describes students entering and leaving social work higher education courses in England. Information about the education and training of social workers was reported by the General Social Care Council (GSCC) before its closure. Skills for Care has been commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) to update the information previously provided by the GSCC report.

Information presented in this report details the analysis of social work higher education data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA¹). Only students who enrol on and leave from courses that lead to a student's eligibility to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC²) were included. This is because HCPC registration is a mandatory requirement to practice social work in England.

“The HCPC’s standards of proficiency are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice within a profession. They set out what a social worker in England must know, understand and be able to do following the completion of their social work degree.” (The College of Social Work)³

In order for workforce planning for social workers in social care to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to understand the take-up of social work education and the demographic profile of students. In this regard, analysis has focused on total numbers of students entering and leaving education between the academic years 2009-10 and 2012-13 (the latest period for which data were available). Further analysis relates to factors that could influence the ‘success rates’ of students in terms of course completion and academic achievement. Data from 70 higher education institutions (HEIs)⁴ were studied for the reported period.

The destinations of social work graduates were also studied using data from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE⁵) survey, collected by HESA. This includes numbers and proportions of graduates who were employed as social workers six months after graduation, as well as those working in a health- or care-related field at this time. Factors that affect the likelihood of a graduate finding employment are discussed.

¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/>

² <http://www.hcpc-uk.org.uk/>

³ <http://www.tcsw.org.uk/standard-2col-rhm.aspx?id=6442451337>

⁴ Previous information presented by the GSCC included higher education courses provided by further education colleges. HESA do not collect data from such institutions and so figures presented in this report may not be perfectly comparable to those presented by the GSCC.

⁵ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/streams/dlhe>

1. Enrolments

This section of the report describes those individuals enrolling on higher education courses in social work. Information is provided about which courses have been included in this analysis, as well as the number of individuals enrolling onto these courses each year and their demographic profile.

Table 1.1 describes social work higher education enrolments between the academic years 2009-10 and 2012-13 by whether the course leads to eligibility to register as a social worker. Courses were categorised for inclusion or exclusion based on whether or not the qualification set out in the student's course aim would allow the student to register with the HCPC after graduation. Between 80% and 95% of enrolments were on courses that led to registration. This proportion was highest in 2009-10 (95%) and has decreased in more recent years⁶. The number of enrolments to courses that do not lead to registration was relatively stable between 2010-11 and 2012-13, whereas enrolments leading to registration eligibility show a year-on-year decrease after 2009-10. This demonstrates that the decline in social work higher education enrolments can be attributed to those courses leading to being eligible to register.

Table 1.1: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by detailed course type

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,940	6,760	6,420	5,710
<i>Percentage of all enrolments that lead to social worker registration</i>	94.7%	85.1%	79.6%	80.8%
Courses leading to social worker registration	5,620	5,750	5,110	4,620
Courses not leading to social worker registration	310	1,010	1,310	1,100

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

All following information relating to social work higher education enrolments describe those enrolments onto courses leading to eligibility to register as a social worker with HCPC. Enrolments to other courses are excluded.

Table 1.2 and Chart 1.1 describe enrolments by course level (undergraduate, postgraduate) over the reported period. Enrolments increased from 5,620 in 2009-10 to 5,750 in 2010-11. This increase was driven by a substantial rise in postgraduate enrolments between these periods (+460) as undergraduate enrolments decreased (-340). From 2010-11 onwards, total enrolments fell from 5,750 to 4,620. Undergraduate enrolments made up 71% of the total in 2009-10 and around 64% thereafter. Postgraduate enrolments rose by 460 in 2010-11 but fell in 2011-12 and 2012-13 by 240 and 200 respectively. In 2009-10 these enrolments accounted for 29% of the total and approximately 36% between 2010-11 and 2012-13.

⁶ This is largely due to the take-up of the 'Graduate diploma/certificate at level H' qualification between 2010-11 and 2012-13.

Table 1.2: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by course level (undergraduate/postgraduate)

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,620	5,750	5,110	4,620
Number				
Undergraduate	4,010	3,670	3,270	2,980
Postgraduate	1,620	2,080	1,840	1,640
%				
Undergraduate	71.3%	63.9%	63.9%	64.6%
Postgraduate	28.7%	36.1%	36.1%	35.4%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Chart 1.1: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by course level (undergraduate/postgraduate)

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

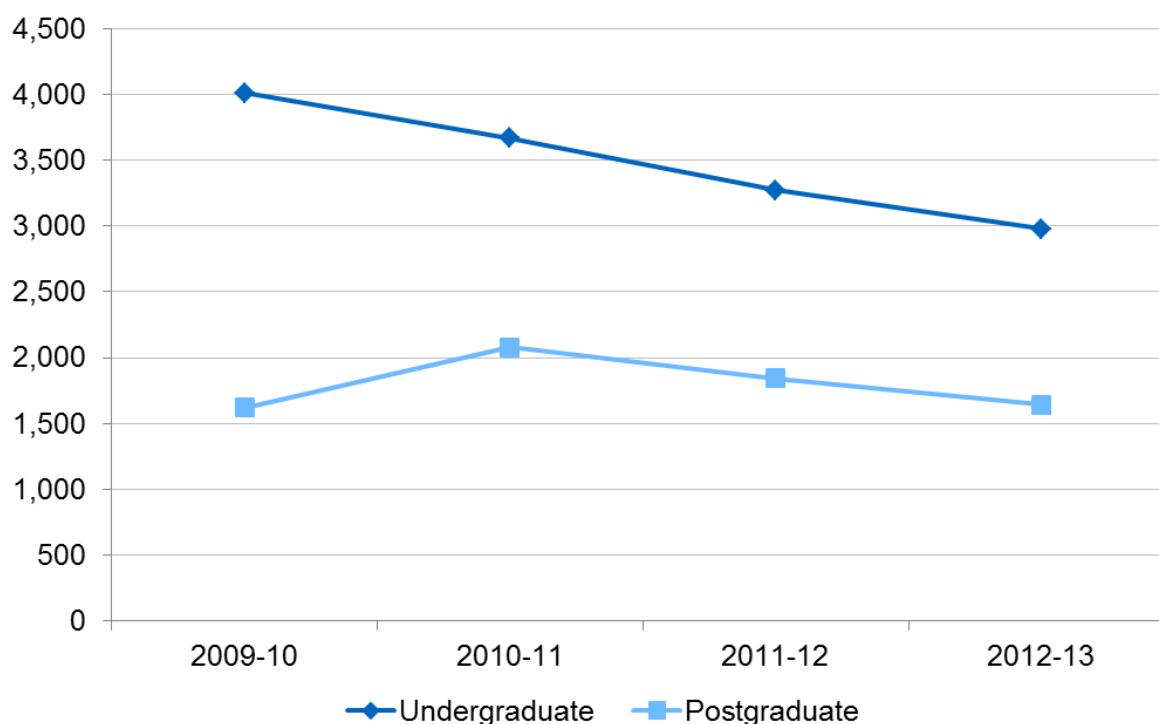


Chart 1.2 shows the percentage make-up of enrolments by mode of study for the period covering 2009-10 to 2012-13⁷. No substantial variation was found between years. Around 87% of enrolments were on a full-time basis (as opposed to part-time or other modes of study). This does not appear to vary by course level (undergraduate / postgraduate) or any demographic factors.

⁷ Proportions were stable for all years and so the average for the period as a whole is reported here.

**Chart 1.2: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by mode of study
Average between 2009-10 to 2012-13.**

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

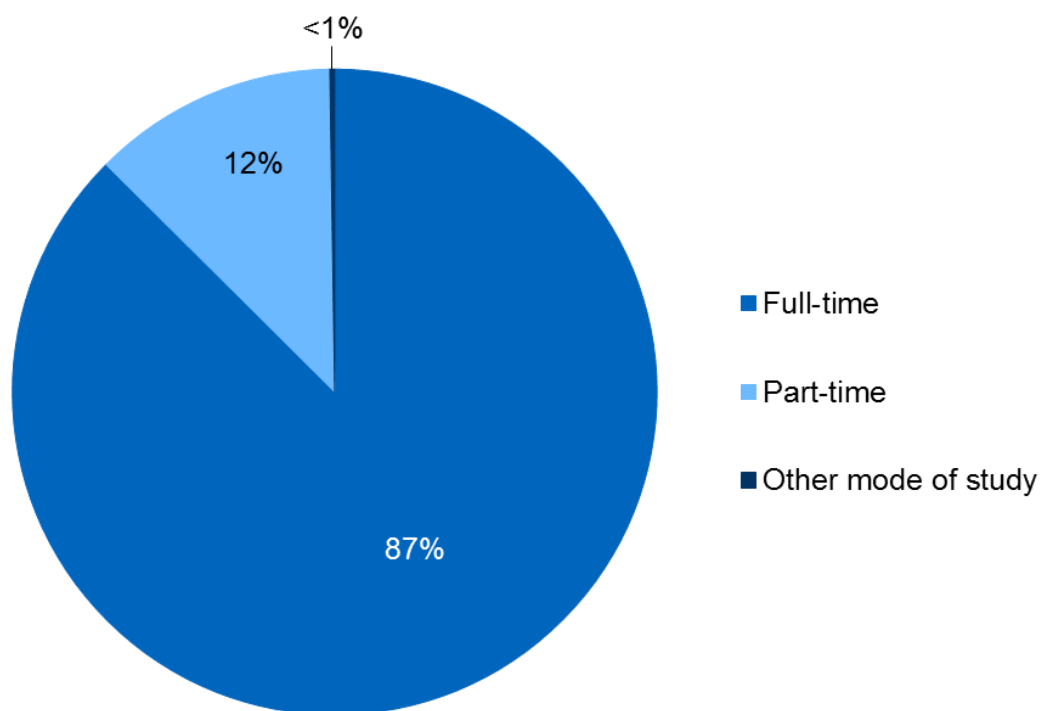


Table 1.3 shows enrolments by the home region of students⁸. Students from the North West have consistently made up the greatest proportion of all social work education enrolments, ranging between 17% and 19%. Other than students from outside of England, those from the North East make up the smallest proportion, between 4% and 7%. There is little indication of any substantial change in regional make-up of enrolments over time. The average regional make-up over the period is similar to the population make-up, suggesting that there are no notable effects of region on the likelihood of an individual entering social work education.

⁸ Individuals from outside of England were categorised as 'Non-England'.

Table 1.3: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by student home region*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,620	5,730	5,100	4,610
Eastern	11.5%	10.5%	7.2%	8.0%
East Midlands	8.1%	8.3%	8.3%	8.0%
London	16.6%	14.7%	13.9%	15.8%
North East	4.0%	4.7%	6.8%	4.9%
North West	17.5%	18.1%	19.2%	18.9%
South East	11.3%	11.8%	12.8%	11.1%
South West	6.6%	6.8%	6.9%	7.5%
West Midlands	10.4%	10.5%	10.5%	9.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	11.7%	12.6%	12.3%	13.3%
Non-England	2.3%	2.1%	2.1%	2.8%

Those students that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Around a third of individuals enrolling on social work courses were aged under 24 years old, as displayed in table 1.4. This proportion shows some variation over the reported period, a steady fall from almost 35% in 2009-10 to 28% in 2011-12 followed by an increase to 32% in 2012-13. Individuals in the 24-29 years bracket made up around a quarter of all enrolments over the period. Those aged 30-39 years also made up around a quarter of all enrolments each year. Only a small proportion of individuals enrolling were aged 50 years or older (around 3%). The average age of enrolling individuals was around 30 years throughout the period. This relatively high age of enrolment may be indicative of individuals enrolling on social work higher education courses as a career change.

Table 1.4: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by course level and student age (group and mean)*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,620	5,750	5,110	4,620
Under 24	34.5%	30.3%	28.3%	31.6%
24-29	23.8%	25.6%	27.1%	24.7%
30-39	23.5%	25.0%	24.2%	25.7%
40-49	15.5%	15.8%	16.5%	14.8%
50plus	2.7%	3.3%	3.9%	3.2%
Average (mean) age	29.4	30.1	30.4	29.8

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 1.5 shows enrolling individuals by gender. Between 83% and 85% of enrolling students were female, which corresponds approximately to the gender make-up of the social worker workforce in adult social care. This does not appear to have changed over the period.

Around 79% of social workers in the statutory adult social care are female, compared to 84% of social work students, suggesting that male students may be under-represented compared to the statutory sector workforce.

Table 1.5: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by student gender

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,620	5,750	5,110	4,620
Female	84.3%	83.9%	83.0%	84.2%
Male	15.7%	16.1%	17.0%	15.8%

Those students that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

As shown in Table 1.6, the majority of individuals enrolling to social work courses were of white ethnicity, ranging between 68% and 74%. Individuals of black ethnicity made up between 15% and 20% of all enrolments. Those of Asian and Other ethnic groups made up a smaller proportion (both around 5%). These proportions showed little change over time.

Table 1.6: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by student ethnicity group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,530	5,690	5,030	4,570
White	70.5%	73.1%	74.1%	68.3%
BME	29.5%	26.9%	25.9%	31.7%
<i>Black</i>	18.3%	16.6%	15.4%	20.3%
<i>Asian</i>	5.7%	4.9%	4.8%	5.6%
<i>Other (including mixed)</i>	4.7%	4.4%	4.8%	4.6%
<i>Non-UK</i>	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%	1.2%

Those students that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 1.7 shows that around 9 in 10 individuals enrolling on social work courses were British. The majority of non-British students were from outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). These students made up between 7% and 9% of all enrolments. Those non-British students from within the EEA made up between 2% and 3% of all enrolments. These proportions were consistent throughout each period.

Table 1.7: Enrolments to HCPC accredited social work courses by student nationality group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,620	5,750	5,110	4,610
British	88.5%	89.5%	90.6%	88.1%
EEA (non British)	2.7%	2.1%	2.3%	2.6%
Non-EEA	8.8%	8.4%	7.1%	9.3%

Those students that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Interim summary: Enrolments

- Between 80% and 95% of social work enrolments were onto courses that lead to social worker registration.
- The number of enrolments onto courses that do not lead to registration was lowest in 2009-10 (310) and was significantly higher for the remainder of the reported period (1,010 to 1,310).
- Between 2009-10 and 2012-13 academic years there has been an overall decline in the number of enrolment to social work education courses leading to HCPC registration from 5,620 to 4,620, despite a slight increase between 2009-10 and 2010-11.
- Most enrolments were onto undergraduate courses (between 64% and 71%).
- The most common home regions of enrolling students were the North West (17% to 19%) and London (14% to 17%). Other than students from outside of England, those from the North East make up the smallest proportion, between 4% and 7%.
- Most students enrol on a full time basis (87%).
- The average age of enrolling students was 30 years old over the reported period. Around a third of students were aged under 24 years.
- Between 83% and 84% of enrolling students were female. This is similar to the gender make-up of the social worker workforce.
- Students of white ethnicity made up between 68% and 74% of the total.
- Around 9 in 10 enrolling students were British. The majority of non-British enrolling students were from outside of the EEA.

2. Course outcomes: Qualifying students

Information on the attainment and course outcomes of social work higher education students is described in this section. As in the 'enrolments' section, a distinction is made between qualifications that lead to eligibility to register as a social worker and those qualifications that do not. Total numbers of qualifications achieved by leaving students are shown for the period covering academic years 2009-10 to 2012-13. The demographic profile of leaving students and, where applicable, factors affecting rates of successful qualification are described. Further to the qualifying/non-qualifying split that is available for all leavers, information about classification of grades is presented for students graduating with an undergraduate qualification. This information is not available for postgraduate leavers.

Table 2.1 shows the total number of students leaving social work courses over the period by whether the course outcome leads to registration eligibility. Around 95% of leaving students achieve a qualification. However, the proportion of leavers graduating with a **qualification leading to registration** is slightly lower, around 79% between 2010-11 and 2012-13. The course outcome profile appears to be different in 2009-10 than in other years, when the proportion of leavers achieving a qualification leading to registration was substantially higher. This is because there were significantly fewer leavers from courses that did not lead to registration eligibility in that year compared to other years.

This section describes students leaving courses that lead to eligibility to register as a social worker, either with or without a qualification. Leavers from courses that do not lead to registration have been excluded.

Table 2.1: Social work higher education leavers by course outcome

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	5,340	5,650	5,570	5,900
<i>Percentage of leavers with a qualification</i>	93.5%	94.5%	95.6%	94.9%
<i>Percentage of leavers with a qualification leading to social worker registration</i>	86.8%	79.9%	78.6%	78.2%
Leavers newly eligible to register as a social worker	4,640	4,510	4,380	4,610
Leavers with a qualification that does not lead to social worker registration	360	830	950	990
No qualification achieved	350	310	250	300

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Table 2.2 and Chart 2.1 show course outcomes over the reported period. The overall number of social work higher education leavers decreased from 4,990 in 2009-10 to 4,820 in 2010-11 and again from 2010-11 to 2011-12 (4,620). However, the total number of leavers increased in 2012-13 to 4,910. The total number of students leaving with a qualification (either undergraduate or postgraduate) has followed the same trend, decreasing year-on-year between 2009-10 and 2011-12 and increasing in 2012-13.

There has been little variation in the proportion of leavers who leave without a qualification, ranging between 5% and 7% over the period. This equates to around 250 to 350 leavers each year who do not obtain a qualification.

Table 2.2: Qualification achieved (undergraduate/postgraduate/no qualification) of leavers from social work higher education courses

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	4,990	4,820	4,620	4,910
Number				
Undergraduate qualifications	3,520	3,150	3,100	3,250
Postgraduate qualifications	1,120	1,370	1,280	1,360
No qualification	350	310	250	300
%				
Undergraduate qualifications	70.5%	65.2%	66.9%	66.3%
Postgraduate qualifications	22.5%	28.4%	27.7%	27.6%
No qualification	6.9%	6.4%	5.3%	6.1%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Chart 2.1: Leavers from HCPC accredited social work courses by course outcome

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

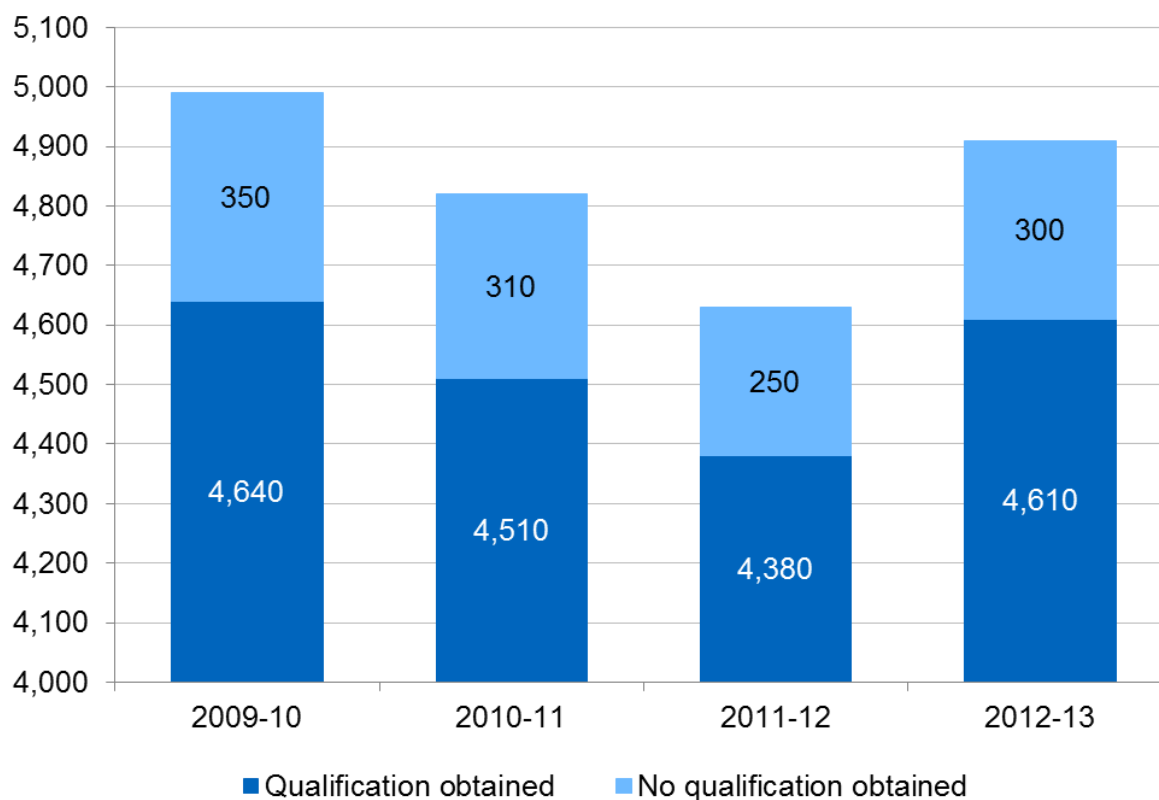


Chart 2.2 demonstrates that the number of leavers achieving an undergraduate qualification has been relatively consistent, between 3,100 and 3,500. The number of leavers with a postgraduate qualification was also stable, between 1,100 and 1,400.

Chart 2.2: Leavers from HCPC accredited social work courses by qualification obtained

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

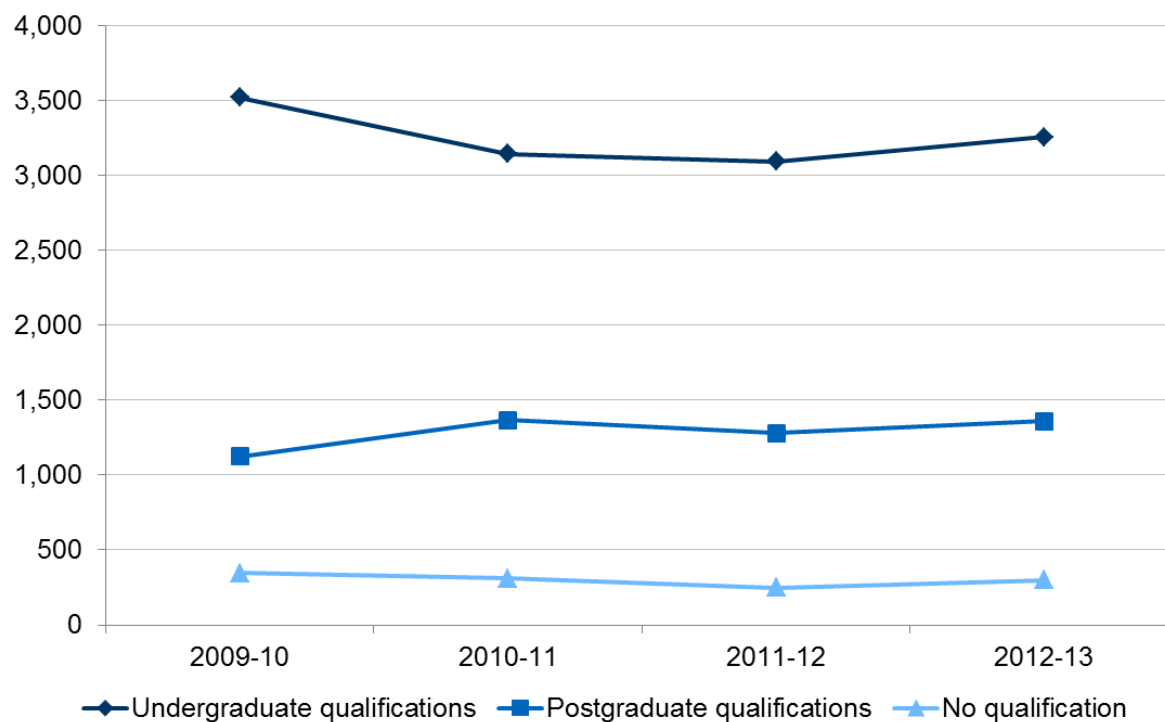


Table 2.3 shows the proportion of leavers who gain a registerable qualification in each age band. For leavers aged 24 years old and older, age does not appear to influence the likelihood of qualifying. Between 93% and 97% of these students gain a registerable qualification. However, those leavers aged under 24 years were slightly less likely to gain a qualification. Between 2009-10 and 2012-13 an average of 13% of these leavers did not achieve a qualification compared to just 5% of leavers aged 24 and above. There appear to be no substantial changes in these proportions over time.

Table 2.3: Qualifying and non-qualifying leavers from social work higher education courses by age group*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		4,990	4,820	4,620	4,910
Under 24	Base	1,000	900	840	760
	Qualifiers	84.9%	87.8%	90.8%	86.2%
	Non-Qualifiers	15.1%	12.2%	9.2%	13.8%
24 to 29	Base	1,390	1,340	1,290	1,360
	Qualifiers	95.0%	94.9%	95.3%	95.7%
	Non-Qualifiers	5.0%	5.1%	4.7%	4.3%
30 to 39	Base	1,360	1,340	1,320	1,450
	Qualifiers	95.1%	95.7%	96.2%	95.9%
	Non-Qualifiers	4.9%	4.3%	3.8%	4.1%
40 to 49	Base	960	970	900	1,020
	Qualifiers	95.6%	94.0%	95.3%	94.7%
	Non-Qualifiers	4.4%	6.0%	4.7%	5.3%
50 plus	Base	280	270	280	320
	Qualifiers	93.8%	94.1%	93.9%	93.7%
	Non-Qualifiers	6.2%	5.9%	6.1%	6.3%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 2.4 shows qualifying and non-qualifying leavers by gender over the reported period. Evidence suggests that gender does affect the likelihood of achieving a qualification. Females were more likely to achieve a qualification than males, though the difference is small.

Table 2.4: Qualifying and non-qualifying leavers from social work higher education courses by gender*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		4,990	4,820	4,620	4,910
Female	Base	4,270	4,160	3,910	4,120
	Qualifiers	93.2%	94.0%	94.9%	94.3%
	Non-Qualifiers	6.8%	6.0%	5.1%	5.7%
Male	Base	710	660	720	780
	Qualifiers	92.3%	90.9%	93.3%	91.8%
	Non-Qualifiers	7.7%	9.1%	6.7%	8.2%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

There is no evidence to suggest that the ethnic group of leaving students influences their course outcome, as shown in table 2.5. Students from white and BME ethnic groups are equally likely to achieve a qualification.

Table 2.5: Qualifying and non-qualifying leavers from social work higher education courses by ethnicity group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		4,830	4,600	4,440	4,720
White	Base	3,540	3,400	3,270	3,490
	Qualifiers	93.5%	93.4%	94.5%	94.0%
	Non-Qualifiers	6.5%	6.6%	5.5%	6.0%
BME	Base	1,290	1,200	1,160	1,230
	Qualifiers	91.4%	93.4%	94.7%	93.1%
	Non-Qualifiers	8.6%	6.6%	5.3%	6.9%
Black	Base	720	730	700	770
	Qualifiers	91.1%	92.6%	94.6%	92.7%
	Non-Qualifiers	8.9%	7.4%	5.4%	7.3%
Asian	Base	280	250	220	210
	Qualifiers	93.3%	95.5%	96.8%	93.9%
	Non-Qualifiers	6.7%	4.5%	3.2%	6.1%
Other (including mixed)	Base	230	180	210	200
	Qualifiers	90.9%	93.7%	92.8%	92.9%
	Non-Qualifiers	9.1%	6.3%	7.2%	7.1%
Non-UK	Base	60	40	40	50
	Qualifiers	88.7%	93.0%	94.6%	95.8%
	Non-Qualifiers	11.3%	7.0%	5.4%	4.2%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 2.6 shows course outcome by the nationality group of leavers. There is little evidence to suggest that British students differ from non-British students in their likelihood to achieve a qualification, nor do leavers with a non-EEA nationality differ from those leavers from the EEA.

Table 2.6: Qualifying and non-qualifying leavers from social work higher education courses by nationality group*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		4,720	4,550	4,350	4,600
British	Base	4,230	4,080	3,920	4,120
	Qualifiers	92.7%	93.0%	94.2%	93.5%
	Non-Qualifiers	7.3%	7.0%	5.8%	6.5%
EEA (non British)	Base	130	110	100	130
	Qualifiers	89.9%	95.3%	99.0%	90.5%
	Non-Qualifiers	10.1%	4.7%	1.0%	9.5%
Non-EEA	Base	370	360	330	360
	Qualifiers	93.2%	95.0%	94.6%	94.7%
	Non-Qualifiers	6.8%	5.0%	5.4%	5.3%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

3. Course outcomes: Classification of grades

Information relating to the classification of qualifications achieved relates only to undergraduate degrees. The following tables are based on all students attaining an undergraduate degree where classification of grade is available. This information is not available for leavers from postgraduate courses.

Table 3.1 and chart 3.1 show the classification of grades over the reported period. Between 10% and 12% of undergraduate qualifiers achieve a first class degree. The majority of students achieve second class attainment (around 79% to 81% across all years) and more of these achieve an upper second rather than lower second class degree. Between 8% and 9% achieve lower than a second class degree (third class/pass/unclassified). This table indicates an upward trend in the proportion of students achieving first class undergraduate degrees, increasing slowly from 10% in 2009-10 to 11.5% in 2012-13.

Table 3.1: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base	3,510	3,140	3,090	3,250
First class	10.0%	10.3%	10.8%	11.5%
Upper second	43.4%	45.7%	46.2%	44.6%
Lower second	37.8%	35.4%	35.0%	34.9%
Third/Pass	8.1%	8.4%	7.4%	8.6%
Unclassified	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Classification of grades is available for undergraduate degrees only.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Chart 3.1: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

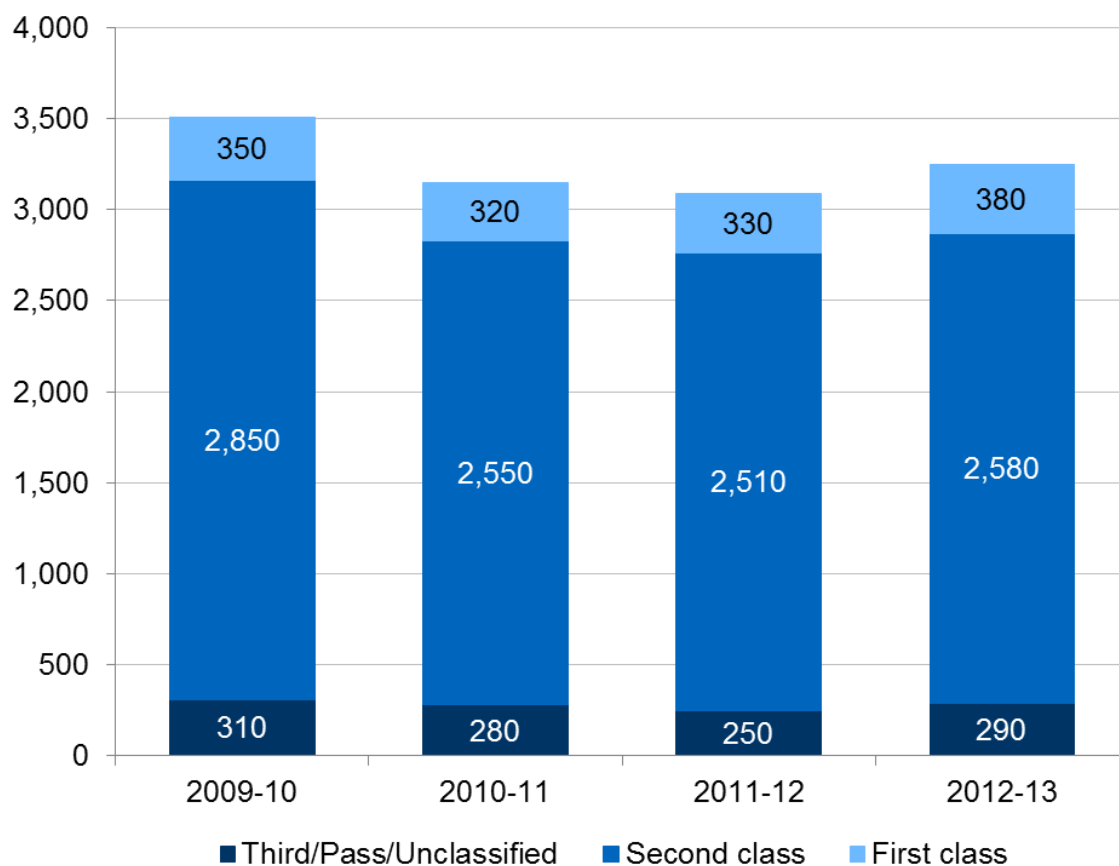


Table 3.2 shows classification of undergraduate degrees by mode of study. Those students studying on a full time basis appear to achieve higher attainment than those studying on a part time or other basis. Around 12% of full time students achieve a first class degree, compared to only 6% of students studying on a non-full time basis. Similarly, a substantially lower proportion of full time students achieve less than a second class degree (around 4.5%) compared to those studying on either part time or other basis (20%).

Table 3.2: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses by mode of study*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		3,510	3,140	3,090	3,250
Full time	Base	2,620	2,340	2,240	2,330
	First class	11.6%	11.5%	12.8%	13.7%
	Second class	83.3%	83.7%	83.7%	81.9%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	5.1%	4.8%	3.5%	4.5%
Part time	Base	610	520	550	630
	First class	5.9%	7.9%	7.3%	8.3%
	Second class	73.3%	72.3%	73.1%	71.7%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	20.8%	19.8%	19.6%	20.0%
Other	Base	280	280	300	300
	First class	3.9%	4.3%	2.3%	1.7%
	Second class	79.2%	75.3%	76.3%	77.3%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	16.9%	20.4%	21.4%	21.1%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Classification of grades is available for undergraduate degrees only.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 3.3 and chart 3.2 show the profile of classification of grades by age over the reported period. There appears to be an association between age and grade classification, in that older individuals are more likely to achieve a grade lower than second class. Similarly, the proportion of leavers attaining a second class degree is highest for the 'under 24' group (87%) and decreases with each increasing age band to 73% of leavers aged 50 or over. Those leavers aged under 24 years old are least likely to achieve a first class degree (6%). These proportions do not appear to have varied substantially over the reported period.

Table 3.3: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses by age group*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		3,510	3,140	3,090	3,250
Under 24	Base	830	770	750	640
	First class	5.0%	6.0%	8.0%	7.2%
	Second class	86.8%	87.3%	86.1%	87.4%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	8.2%	6.7%	5.9%	5.5%
24 to 29	Base	750	650	610	670
	First class	9.4%	9.8%	11.4%	14.2%
	Second class	83.1%	83.6%	82.8%	78.6%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	7.5%	6.6%	5.8%	7.1%
30 to 39	Base	950	880	880	960
	First class	12.1%	12.6%	12.5%	13.8%
	Second class	80.4%	78.7%	80.3%	77.4%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	7.5%	8.7%	7.2%	8.7%
40 to 49	Base	770	670	680	770
	First class	14.0%	12.3%	10.7%	11.9%
	Second class	76.5%	77.0%	77.6%	77.2%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	9.5%	10.8%	11.7%	11.0%
50 plus	Base	220	170	190	210
	First class	8.1%	11.3%	12.4%	4.3%
	Second class	74.0%	70.8%	72.0%	76.3%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	17.9%	17.9%	15.6%	19.4%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Classification of grades is available for undergraduate degrees only.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Chart 3.2: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses by age group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

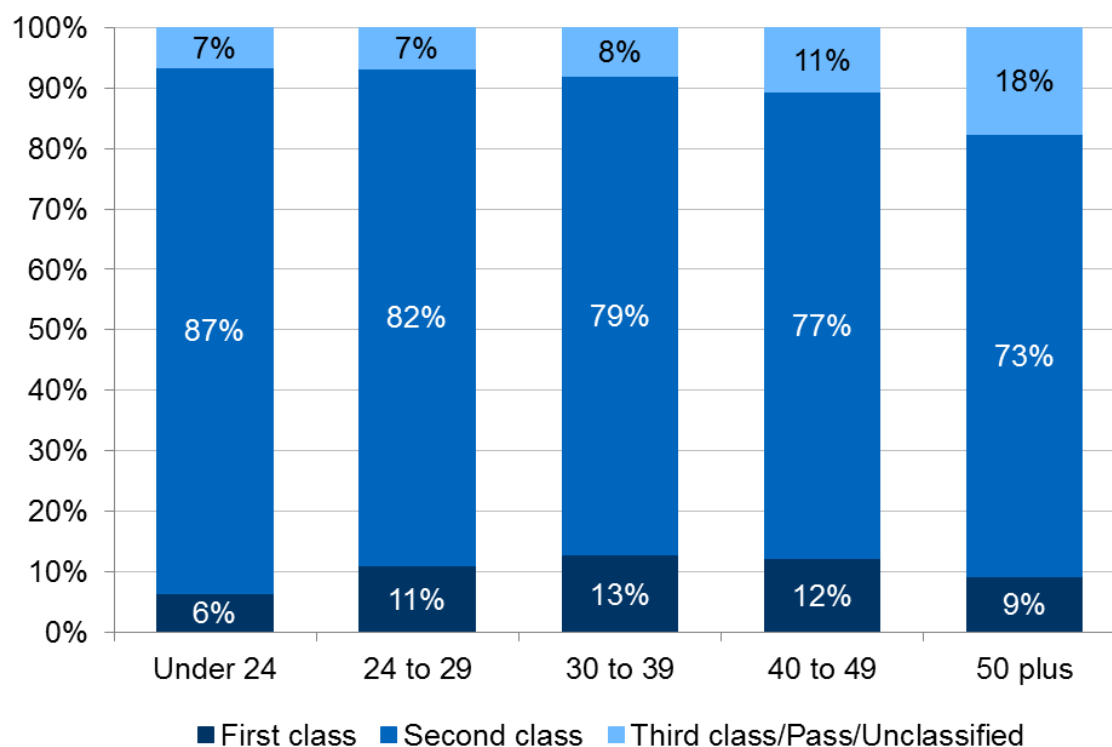


Table 3.4 shows classification of grades by gender. There appears to be an effect of gender of grade classification, whereby male students are more likely to achieve a first class degree (around 14%) compared to females (around 10%). However, females were more likely to achieve a second class degree (around 82%) than males (around 76%). These proportions were relatively consistent over the reported period and so proportions described above relate to the average across years.

Table 3.4: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses by gender

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		3,510	3,140	3,090	3,250
Female	Base	3,060	2,770	2,650	2,800
	First class	9.2%	9.7%	10.6%	11.2%
	Second class	82.1%	81.8%	81.8%	80.2%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	8.7%	8.5%	7.7%	8.6%
Male	Base	450	370	440	450
	First class	15.1%	14.2%	12.3%	13.7%
	Second class	75.6%	75.4%	77.0%	75.0%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	9.3%	10.4%	10.7%	11.3%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Classification of grades is available for undergraduate degrees only.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

The classification of grades varies by the ethnic group of students, as shown in table 3.5. Students of white ethnicity are more likely to achieve a first class degree (around 12%) than those of BME ethnicity (around 6%). The proportion of students achieving a second class degree does not vary by ethnic group (81% average across years for both white and BME students) but BME students are more likely to achieve a grade lower than second class (around 12%) compared to white students (around 7%).

Table 3.5: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses by ethnicity group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		3,420	3,040	3,010	3,120
White	Base	2,530	2,310	2,220	2,340
	First class	11.6%	12.1%	12.6%	12.9%
	Second class	81.7%	80.9%	81.0%	79.5%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	6.7%	7.0%	6.4%	7.6%
BME	Base	890	730	790	780
	First class	5.7%	4.8%	6.5%	8.2%
	Second class	80.0%	82.4%	83.7%	79.6%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	14.3%	12.8%	9.9%	12.2%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Classification of grades is available for undergraduate degrees only.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Similarly, the nationality of a student appears to influence the classification of grade achieved, as displayed in table 3.6. British students are more likely to achieve a first class degree (around 11%) than non-British students (around 6%). These proportions are reversed for students achieving a degree lower than second class, where around 12% of non-British students gain a third class, passing or unclassified degree compared to 7% of British students. Around 82% of both British and non-British students achieve second class attainment.

Table 3.6: Classification of qualification achieved of students from undergraduate social work courses by nationality group*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Base		3,280	2,960	2,900	3,020
British	Base	2,940	2,670	2,590	2,700
	First class	10.7%	10.8%	11.6%	12.8%
	Second class	82.4%	82.0%	82.4%	79.3%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	6.9%	7.2%	6.0%	8.0%
EEA (non British)	Base	90	50	70	70
	First class	11.8%	15.1%	9.2%	6.9%
	Second class	82.4%	71.7%	83.1%	83.3%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	5.9%	13.2%	7.7%	9.7%
Non-EEA	Base	260	230	240	250
	First class	4.7%	4.3%	6.6%	6.0%
	Second class	80.8%	81.1%	83.5%	84.7%
	Third class/Pass/Unclassified	14.5%	14.6%	9.9%	9.3%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Classification of grades is available for undergraduate degrees only.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Interim summary: Course outcomes

- Around 95% of leaving students achieved a qualification. However, the proportion of all leavers graduating with a **qualification leading to registration** was slightly lower, between 78% and 87%.
- The number of leavers who were newly eligible to register as a social worker was 4,640 in 2009-10. It decreased in 2010-11 and again in 2011-12 before increasing in 2012-13 to approximately the same level as in 2009-10 (4,610).
- The number of leavers achieving an undergraduate qualification ranged between 3,100 and 3,520. The number of leavers with a postgraduate qualification was also stable, between 1,120 and 1,370.
- Between 250 and 350 students (5% to 7% of all leavers) left each year without obtaining a qualification.
- Leavers aged under 24 years were slightly less likely to gain a qualification (85% to 91%) than those aged 24 or over (93% to 97%).
- Other than age, no substantial effects of demographic on a student's likelihood to achieve a qualification were found.
- Between 10% and 12% of undergraduate qualifiers achieve a first class degree. The majority of students achieve second class attainment (around 79% to 81% across all years) and most of these achieve an upper second rather than lower second class degree.
- Around 12% of full time undergraduate students achieve a first class degree, compared to only 6% of students studying on a non-full time basis.
- The proportion of undergraduate leavers attaining either a first or second class degree is highest for the 'under 24' group (93% first or second class attainment) and decreases with each increasing age band to leavers aged 50 or over (82% first or second class attainment).
- British students are more likely to achieve a first class degree (around 11%) than non-british students (around 6%).

4. Attrition rates

The previous section dealt with the numbers of students leaving social work higher education each year. This section provides further information on the success rates of students in terms of course completion and non-completion, as well as discussing the reasons why a student may not complete his/her course and whether the qualification achieved matches the qualification set out in the course aim.

For this section, students from all reported academic years (2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13) have been aggregated. This allows for more robust conclusions to be drawn about the target population. The 'course outcomes' sections demonstrate that there has been little change in course outcomes over the reported period and so, based on this finding, it is assumed that conclusions presented here can be taken to reflect all students leaving social work higher education.

All charts and tables presented below relate to social work higher education students generally. Base values should not be taken as a specific cohort of leavers but rather they represent the number of student records that were used for analysis.

Table 4.1 and chart 4.1 describe social work students' reasons for leaving education. The majority of students (94%) completed their course (i.e. they did not leave before the course finished). The remaining 6% of students failed to complete their course duration. Of these, there was an approximate three-way split between students leaving due to academic failure (2%), personal reasons and those who 'dropped out' (2%) and other reasons (2%).

Table 4.1: Social work higher education students' course completion status

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	Number / %
Base	17,400
Completed course duration	93.8%
Academic failure	1.8%
Personal reasons / dropped out	2.4%
Other reasons	2.1%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

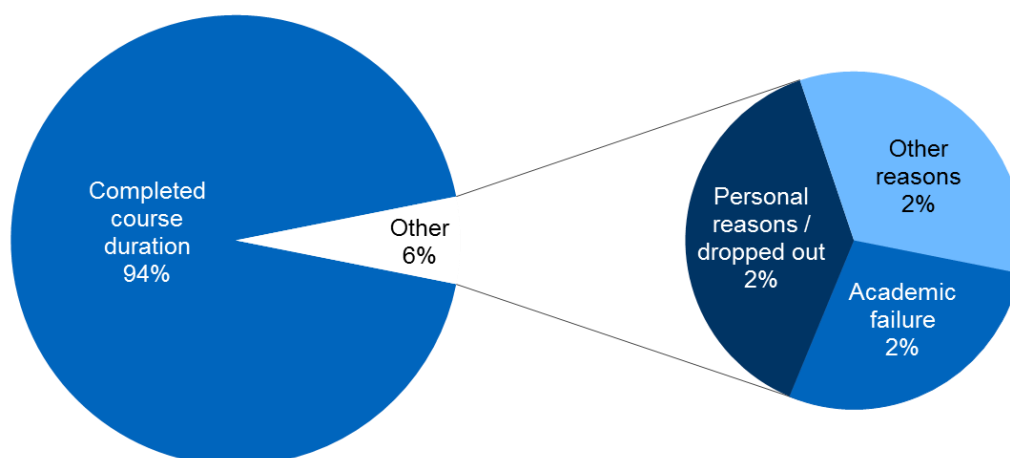
Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Chart 4.1: Social work higher education students' course completion status

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13



To disaggregate the completion status as shown in table 4.1 and chart 4.1 from the qualification outcome, table 4.2 compares course outcome (qualifications) against reason for leaving the instance of education. Of those students who completed the full duration of their course (94%), almost all of them achieved the qualification set out in their course aim (97.5%). Those who completed the course duration but did not achieve their course aim either achieved no qualification (less than 1%) or achieved a qualification lower than that set out in their course aim (around 2%)⁹. Of those students who failed to complete the course duration (6%), the vast majority left without achieving any qualification (around 98%).

Table 4.2: Social work higher education students' qualification obtained by course completion status

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	Completed course duration	Academic failure	Personal reasons / dropped out	Other reasons
Base	16,310	310	420	360
Qualification obtained equals course aim	97.5%	0.0%	1.0%	1.1%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	1.8%	2.6%	0.5%	1.7%
No qualification obtained	0.8%	97.4%	98.6%	97.2%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

⁹ A lower qualification could be, for example, institutional credits or a certificate demonstrating completion of modules.

Table 4.3 shows course completion status and qualification obtained by the level of the course aim. Course aim does not appear to affect students' likelihood of completing their course duration, although there is evidence to suggest that students undertaking a degree at undergraduate level are more likely to leave due to academic failure than students studying for postgraduate degrees or other qualification.

The proportion of postgraduate students who left with a qualification lower than that in their course aim (6%) was substantially greater than that of undergraduate students (less than 1%). These students were less likely to leave their course having achieved no qualification at all. Only 5% of students enrolled on a postgraduate degree failed to achieve any qualification. This contrasts to students undertaking an undergraduate degree, where 7% left the course without a qualification.

Table 4.3: Social work higher education students' course completion status and qualification obtained by course aim

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	Under-graduate degree	Post-graduate degree	Other qualifications
Base	12,420	3,840	1,130
Course completion status			
Completed course duration	93.5%	94.8%	93.6%
Academic failure	2.1%	0.8%	0.7%
Personal reasons / dropped out	2.2%	2.6%	4.1%
Other reasons	2.2%	1.8%	1.5%
Qualification obtained			
Qualification obtained equals course aim	92.0%	89.0%	93.3%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	0.6%	5.9%	0.3%
No qualification obtained	7.4%	5.2%	6.4%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 4.4 demonstrates that students who studied on a full time basis were slightly more likely to complete their course duration (93%) than those studying on a part time basis (92%). Those studying on a full time basis were also more likely to achieve their course aim (92%) than their part time counterparts (88%).

Table 4.4: Social work higher education students' course completion status and qualification obtained by mode of study*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

	Full time	Part time	Other
Base	13,880	1,980	1,530
Course completion status			
Completed course duration	93.4%	91.9%	99.5%
Academic failure	1.9%	1.9%	0.1%
Personal reasons / dropped out	2.5%	3.4%	0.3%
Other reasons	2.2%	2.8%	0.1%
Qualification obtained			
Qualification obtained equals course aim	91.6%	87.5%	95.2%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	1.3%	2.9%	4.4%
No qualification obtained	7.1%	9.6%	0.4%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Table 4.5 shows course completion status and qualification obtained by age group. It is apparent that those students aged under 24 years old at the time of leaving were less likely to complete their course duration (88%) and also less likely to achieve their course aim (87%) than students leaving at the age of 24 or over (95% and 93% average across age bands respectively). There is little evidence to suggest any difference between the other age bands in terms of likelihood to complete the course duration or to achieve the course aim.

Table 4.5: Social work higher education students' course completion status and qualification obtained by age group*Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13*

	Under 24	24 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 plus
Base	3,400	4,990	4,850	3,260	910
Course completion status					
Completed course duration	87.8%	95.5%	95.7%	94.7%	93.1%
Academic failure	4.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%
Personal reasons / dropped out	5.0%	1.8%	1.3%	2.0%	3.0%
Other reasons	3.1%	1.6%	1.8%	2.0%	2.7%
Qualification obtained					
Qualification obtained equals course aim	86.6%	93.0%	93.1%	92.1%	89.8%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	0.5%	1.9%	2.1%	2.0%	2.6%
No qualification obtained	12.9%	5.1%	4.8%	6.0%	7.6%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Male students were less likely to complete their course duration (92%) than females (94%), as shown in table 4.6. They were also less likely to achieve their course aim (88%) than females (92%) but slightly more likely to achieve a lower qualification (3%).

Table 4.6: Social work higher education students' course completion status and qualification obtained by gender

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	Female	Male
Base	14,840	2,550
Course completion status		
Completed course duration	94.1%	91.8%
Academic failure	1.6%	2.7%
Personal reasons / dropped out	2.3%	2.8%
Other reasons	2.0%	2.7%
Qualification obtained		
Qualification obtained equals course aim	92.0%	88.4%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	1.6%	2.8%
No qualification obtained	6.5%	8.8%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

There is no evidence to suggest a difference between students of white and BME ethnicities in likelihood to complete their course duration (table 4.7). BME students were slightly more likely to leave the course due to academic failure (3%) than white students (1%) and white students were slightly more likely to leave for personal reasons (3%) than those of BME ethnicity (1%).

Asian students were more likely to complete their course duration (95%) than students of black, other (mixed) or non-UK ethnic groups (averaging 93%). They were also more likely to leave education with a qualification (93%) than other BME students (averaging 90%).

Table 4.7: Social work higher education students' course completion status and qualification obtained by ethnicity group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	White	BME	Black	Asian	Other (including mixed)	Non-UK
Base	12,620	4,560	2,730	890	760	170
Course completion status						
Completed course duration	94.0%	93.3%	92.8%	95.2%	92.9%	92.4%
Academic failure	1.3%	3.0%	3.7%	1.3%	3.2%	1.2%
Personal reasons / dropped out	2.8%	1.4%	1.1%	1.7%	1.3%	4.7%
Other reasons	1.9%	2.3%	2.4%	1.8%	2.6%	1.7%
Qualification obtained						
Qualification obtained equals course aim	91.7%	90.9%	90.4%	92.8%	90.4%	91.3%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%	1.8%	1.2%
No qualification obtained	6.6%	7.3%	7.7%	5.6%	7.8%	7.6%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Likewise, there appears to be little notable difference in course completion status or qualification obtained between students of British, EEA and non-EEA nationality (table 4.8). Non-EEA students were slightly less likely to leave for personal reasons or to drop out of education (1%) than were British or EEA students (both 2.5%).

Table 4.8: Social work higher education students' course completion status by nationality group

Source: HESA Student Record 2009/10 - 2012/13

	British	EEA (non British)	Non-EEA
Base	15,580	430	1,350
Course completion status			
Completed course duration	93.7%	93.1%	94.5%
Academic failure	1.7%	1.8%	2.2%
Personal reasons / dropped out	2.5%	2.5%	1.2%
Other reasons	2.1%	2.5%	2.1%
Qualification obtained			
Qualification obtained equals course aim	91.4%	90.8%	92.5%
Qualification obtained less than course aim	1.7%	2.1%	1.8%
No qualification obtained	6.9%	7.1%	5.8%

Base values combine leavers from multiple academic years.

Analysis comparing student attrition rates between years is not available .

Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Those leavers that could not be allocated to a category have been excluded from base values

Interim summary: Attrition rates

- Between 80% and 95% of social work enrolments were onto courses that lead to social worker registration.
- The remaining 6% of students failed to complete their course duration. Of these, there was an approximate three-way split between students leaving due to academic failure (2%), personal reasons and those who 'dropped out' (2%) and other reasons (2%).
- Of those students who completed the full duration of their course, almost all of them achieved the qualification set out in their course aim (97.5%). Those who completed the course duration but did not achieve their course aim either achieved no qualification (less than 1%) or achieved a qualification lower than that set out in their course aim (around 2%).
- The proportion of postgraduate students who left with a qualification lower than that in their course aim (6%) was substantially greater than that of undergraduate students (less than 1%).
- Students aged under 24 years old at the time of leaving were less likely to complete their course duration (88%) and also less likely to achieve their course aim (87%) than students leaving at the age of 24 or over (95% and 93% average across age bands respectively).
- Male students were less likely to complete their course duration (92%) than females (94%). They were also less likely to achieve their course aim (88%) than females (92%) but slightly more likely to achieve a lower qualification (3%).

5. Destination of leavers

This section of the report discusses conclusions drawn from analysis of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, including the activities and employment status of social work higher education graduates six months after graduation. Although this survey attempts to cover all leavers from higher education within the target population, it is non-mandatory and so some non-response would be expected.

Table 5.1 shows the DLHE sample size for 2011-12 and 2012-13 and the proportion of the target population that are accounted for. Of the 4,380 qualified leavers in 2011-12, 65.5% completed the DLHE survey. This proportion rose to 67% of the 4,610 qualified leavers in 2012-13.

Table 5.1: Target population, sample size and response rate for DLHE analysis, 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

	2011-12	2012-13
Target population*	4,380	4,610
Sample size	2,870	3,100
Response rate	65.5%	67.1%

*Students leaving HCPC accredited social work courses with a qualification leading to eligibility to register as a social worker (2011-12 and 2012-13).

In order to draw conclusions about all social work higher education graduates (with a qualification leading to registration eligibility), it was necessary that these samples were tested for areas of systematic skew (where respondents differ from non-respondents in some aspect that is likely to distort results). For both years, the mode of study (full time / part time / other) and course aim were found to differ significantly between respondents and non-respondents. These factors were accounted for when applying sample results to the target population.

The following tables have, therefore, been adjusted by course aim and mode of study to represent all social work higher education leavers for 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Table 5.2 shows the main activity of qualified leavers six months after graduation. The vast majority of graduates from academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13 were in employment at the time of the survey (82% and 83% respectively). This equates to 3,600 from 2011-12 and

around 3,800 from 2012-13. A smaller percentage were combining work with study (4% in 2011-12, 5% in 2012-13) and around 1% of graduates from each year were engaged in study only.

Table 5.2: Main activity category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

	2011-12		2012-13	
	Number	%	Number	%
All qualifiers	4,380	*	4,610	*
Unweighted base	2,870	*	3,100	*
Working	3,600	82.4%	3,820	82.9%
Studying	50	1.1%	60	1.4%
Working and studying	160	3.6%	210	4.6%
Neither working nor studying	570	12.8%	520	11.1%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion. This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

Table 5.3 and chart 5.1 show the jobs that were being worked by social work higher education graduates six months after leaving education. Job categories presented below were based on Standard Occupational Codes (SOC). **An estimated 53% of 2011-12 graduates and 58% of 2012-13 graduates were working as a social worker six months after graduation¹⁰**. This can be taken to reflect the 'conversion rate' of social work higher education courses (i.e. the proportion of those individuals who could potentially work as social workers that actually do so). These proportions equate to 2,300 newly qualified social workers in 2011-12 and around 2,700 in 2012-13.

Further to those graduates who were not working as social workers six months after graduation, an estimated 1,200 in 2011-12 and 1,100 in 2012-13 (27% and 23% respectively) went on to work in a health and/or social care-related job¹¹.

A small proportion of all graduates went on to work in an occupation not related to health or social care (between 6% and 7%) and between 12% and 14% of graduates were

¹⁰ These estimates are based on a 'snapshot' taken six months after graduation per leaver. It is likely that some of those who were not counted to this proportion go on to work as a social worker at a later time.

¹¹ Jobs pertaining to either health or social care have been grouped for this analysis due to some ambiguous SOC categories

unemployed¹². A fraction of these graduates were either involved in full time study (see table 29) or were unemployed but due to start work at the time the survey was conducted.

Table 5.3: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

	2011-12		2012-13	
	Number	%	Number	%
All qualifiers	4,380	*	4,610	*
Unweighted base	2,870	*	3,100	*
Social workers	2,300	52.6%	2,670	57.9%
Care/Health related	1,170	26.8%	1,060	23.2%
Not related to social care or health	290	6.6%	290	6.3%
<i>Not working / Job title not classified*</i>	610	14.0%	580	12.6%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

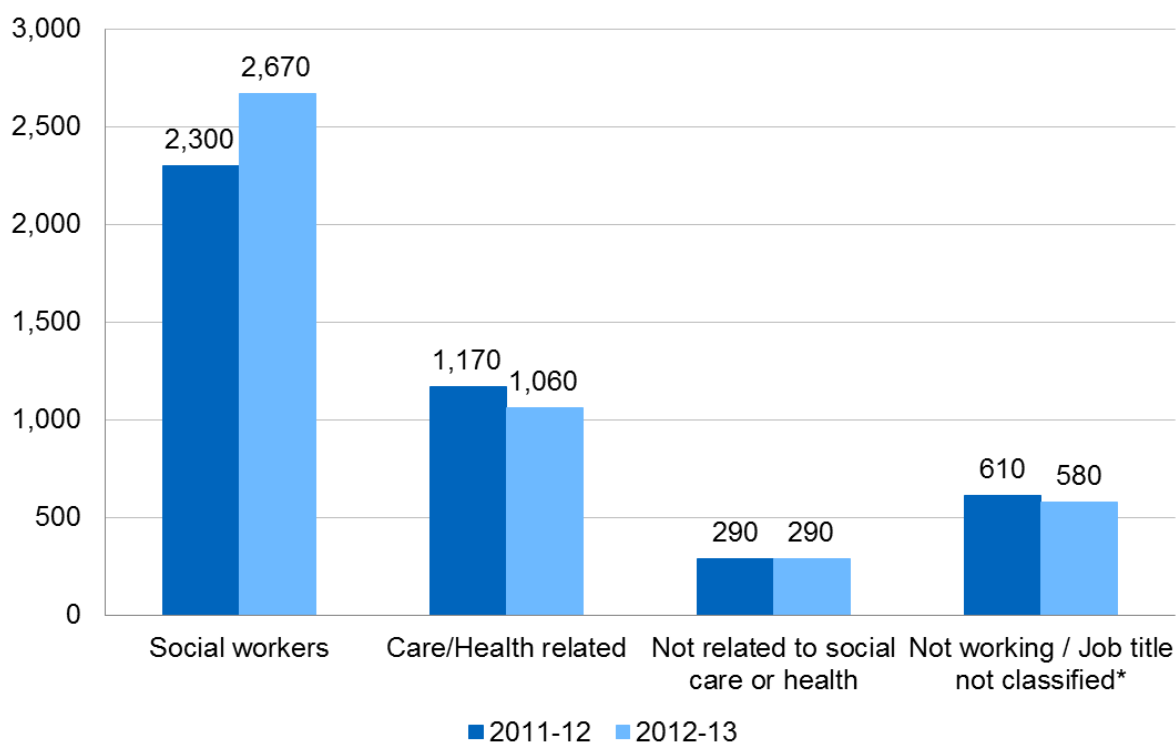
This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

*This category corresponds to the sum of those students whose main activity **does not** involve working full time, part time or in conjunction with study

¹² A very small proportion of this group are employed in a job role that could not be categorised.

Chart 5.1: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13



Skills for Care collects information on newly qualified social worker (NQSW) registrations for the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)¹³. This is available for social workers working with adult service users only. In 2011-12 there were 580 registrations, which rose to 820 in 2012-13. Corresponding information from the Department for Education (DfE¹⁴) and Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC¹⁵) places the total number of NQSWs working with children at 1,810 in 2011-12 and 1,920 in 2012-13¹⁶. Based on this information, the total number of NQSWs was estimated for 2011-12 and 2012-13 and these estimates were compared to estimates based on HESA data (see table 5.4).

¹³ [http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Social-work/Assessed-and-Supported-Year-in-Employment/The-Assessed-and-Supported-Year-in-Employment-\(ASYE\).aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Social-work/Assessed-and-Supported-Year-in-Employment/The-Assessed-and-Supported-Year-in-Employment-(ASYE).aspx)

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

¹⁵ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120119192332/http://cwdcouncil.org.uk/>

¹⁶ This information was collected by CWDC for years 2009-10 and 2010-11. DfE took on this function following the closure of CWDC in 2011.

Table 5.4: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation

Source: SfC NQSW data, HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

	2011-12	2012-13
NQSW registrations (adult only)*	580	820
NQSW registrations (children only)**	1,810	1,920
NQSW registrations (total)	2,390	2,740
Graduates employed as social workers after 6 months***	2,300	2,670

*Derived from SfC NQSW registrations data

**Derived from DfE and CWDC NQSW registrations data

***Estimated number of social work higher education graduates working as social workers six months after graduation

These separate data sources appear to produce similar estimates for the total number of NQSWs. It should be noted that these figures may not necessarily be perfectly comparable for reasons relating to the time of data collection and that analysis from the DLHE sample has been weighted to reflect all social work higher education graduates¹⁷.

The following tables and charts describe the destination of social work higher education graduates in terms of course-related factors and demographics. Where possible, interpretation describes factors that contribute to the likelihood of a graduate working as a social worker or in a health or care-related field.

As above, all percentage breakdowns presented below are based on the DLHE survey, weighted by mode of study and course level. This is to ensure that figures represent all graduates, rather than only those completing the DLHE survey.

Table 5.5 shows destination of leavers by course level. Students gaining postgraduate qualifications were more likely to go on to work as social workers (between 61% and 62%) than those achieving at undergraduate level (between 52% and 56%). Conversely, undergraduates were more likely to go on to work in a health- or care-related field (25%) than postgraduates (between 17% and 21%). The proportion of graduates either unemployed or not working in a health- or care-related field was roughly the same between postgraduate and undergraduate qualifiers (around 20%), although there is evidence to suggest that this latter proportion was lower in 2012-13 than in 2011-12.

¹⁷ DLHE information is collected at student level approximately six months after graduation. For 2012-13, the resulting data would be based on information collected between February, 2013 (six months after August, 2012) and January, 2014 (six months after July, 2013). Therefore, the total numbers of NQSWs as derived from different data sources (HESA, SfC, DfE and CWDC) may not correspond perfectly. Further to this, the numbers of NQSWs as derived from HESA data are estimated based on the DLHE sample, where it is assumed that non-respondents are represented by respondents in terms of their likelihood to be working as social workers. Although samples have been weighted up to the target population based on known areas of skew, there may be other influential factors that were not accounted for in this analysis.

Table 5.5: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by course level

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

		2011-12	2012-13
All qualifiers		4,380	4,610
Unweighted base		2,870	3,100
Undergraduate	All qualifiers	3,100	3,250
	Social workers	52.3%	56.0%
	Care/Health related	25.3%	24.8%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	22.4%	19.2%
Postgraduate	All qualifiers	1,280	1,360
	Social workers	62.4%	61.0%
	Care/Health related	17.0%	21.0%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	20.6%	18.0%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

Table 5.6 and chart 5.2 show destination of leavers by mode of study (full time / part time / other). There does not appear to be a substantial difference in destinations between graduates studying on a full time and part time basis. However, those graduates with an 'other' mode of study (graduating from dormant status, taken a break from study etc.) were more likely to be unemployed or working in a non-care related role after graduation.

Table 5.6: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by mode of study

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

		2011-12	2012-13
All qualifiers		4,380	4,610
Unweighted base		2,870	3,100
Full time	All qualifiers	3,100	3,230
	Social workers	56.1%	57.8%
	Care/Health related	22.6%	22.7%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	21.3%	19.5%
Part time	All qualifiers	680	700
	Social workers	54.0%	61.7%
	Care/Health related	24.4%	26.1%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	21.6%	12.2%
Other	All qualifiers	590	680
	Social workers	52.1%	51.7%
	Care/Health related	22.2%	25.7%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	25.6%	22.6%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

Chart 5.2: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by mode of study

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

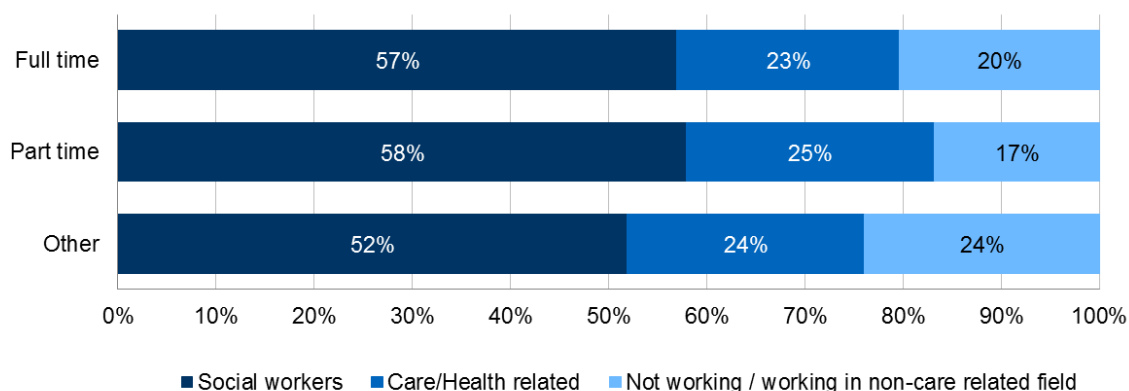


Table 5.7 demonstrates how the destinations of graduates vary by leaver age. Graduates aged from 24 to 29 (61%) and 30 to 39 (60%) were the most likely to go on to work as social workers, as shown in chart 5.3. That is, graduates in these age bands tended to have a higher 'conversion rate' from graduation from social work education to being employed social workers than other age bands such as those aged under 24 (47%) and 50 or over (50%).

Those graduates aged under 24 were the most likely to be working in a health- or care-related role (30%). Graduates aged under 24 and 50 or over were most likely to be unemployed or working in a role not related to social care (22% and 25% respectively) than those aged between 24 and 49 years. Taken together, this may suggest that younger graduates face more difficulty finding employment in social work, possibly due to having less employment experience. Social care roles other than social work may be taken to gain experience in a related setting.

Table 5.7: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by gender

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

		2011-12	2012-13
All qualifiers		4,380	4,610
Unweighted base		2,870	3,100
Under 24	All qualifiers	780	670
	Social workers	46.7%	48.0%
	Care/Health related	31.0%	29.6%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	22.2%	22.4%
24 to 29	All qualifiers	1,190	1,330
	Social workers	59.2%	61.9%
	Care/Health related	20.6%	22.2%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	20.2%	15.9%
30 to 39	All qualifiers	1,260	1,350
	Social workers	60.0%	59.4%
	Care/Health related	18.6%	21.4%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	21.4%	19.2%
40 to 49	All qualifiers	880	940
	Social workers	52.7%	57.2%
	Care/Health related	24.1%	24.2%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	23.2%	18.6%
50 plus	All qualifiers	270	320
	Social workers	48.3%	51.4%
	Care/Health related	25.1%	25.6%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	26.7%	23.0%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

Chart 5.3: Proportion of social work higher education graduates employed as a social worker six months after graduation by age group

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

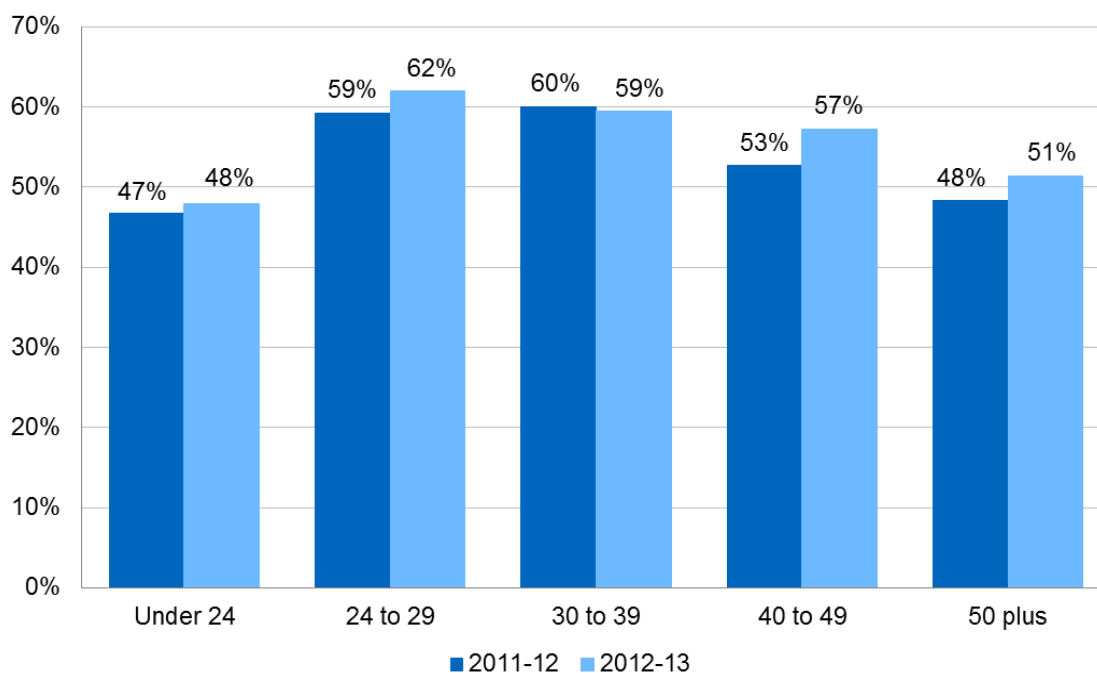


Table 5.8 demonstrates that both male and female graduates were equally likely to be working as a social worker six months after graduating. There was not a substantial difference in the destinations make-up of leavers by gender for 2011-12 or 2012-13. It should be noted that this was found in the context of cohorts of graduates made up by between 85% (2011-12) and 84% (2012-13) female students.

Table 5.8: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by gender

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

		2011-12	2012-13
All qualifiers		4,380	4,610
Unweighted base		2,870	3,100
Female	All qualifiers	3,710	3,890
	Social workers	55.2%	57.9%
	Care/Health related	22.6%	23.7%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	22.2%	18.3%
Male	All qualifiers	660	720
	Social workers	55.4%	55.1%
	Care/Health related	24.2%	23.3%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	20.4%	21.6%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

There is a clear difference in destination of graduates by ethnic group (table 5.9). Graduates of white ethnicity were more likely to be working as social workers six months after graduation (60%) than workers of BME ethnicity (46%). It may be the case that this finding can be attributed to an intermediate factor that has not been accounted for in this analysis such as the ethnicity profile of the population and social worker vacancy rates at regional level.

Table 5.9: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by ethnicity group

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

		2011-12	2012-13
All qualifiers		4,380	4,610
Unweighted base		2,850	3,060
White	All qualifiers	3,300	3,480
	Social workers	58.7%	60.7%
	Care/Health related	23.4%	23.6%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	17.9%	15.7%
BME	All qualifiers	1,080	1,130
	Social workers	44.2%	46.9%
	Care/Health related	21.5%	24.3%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	34.3%	28.8%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

Table 5.10 shows destination of leavers by the nationality of graduates. British graduates were more likely to be working as a social worker six months after graduation (57%) than were graduates from the EEA (52%) or from outside of Europe (41%). Conversely, graduates with a non-EEA nationality were more likely to be unemployed or working in a role not related to social care (36%) than those of EEA (24%) or British (19%) nationality. The proportion of graduates working in a health- or care-related role other than as a social worker was the same for all nationality groups (between 23% and 24%).

Table 5.10: Occupation category of social work higher education leavers six months after graduation by gender

Source: HESA Student Record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey 2011/12 - 2012/13

		2011-12	2012-13
All qualifiers		4,380	4,610
Unweighted base		2,820	3,030
British	All qualifiers	4,000	4,140
	Social workers	56.4%	58.5%
	Care/Health related	22.5%	23.9%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	21.0%	17.6%
EEA (non Bri	All qualifiers	90	130
	Social workers	53.2%	51.5%
	Care/Health related	20.5%	26.0%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	26.3%	22.4%
Non-EEA	All qualifiers	280	340
	Social workers	38.6%	42.5%
	Care/Health related	24.5%	23.1%
	Not working / working in non-care related field	36.9%	34.4%

Columns may not sum to total due to rounding.

Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) were used to allocate leavers to categories

Data presented in this table have been weighted to adjust for any potential skew in DLHE completion.

This ensures that information relates to all social work higher education leavers for each year.

Interim summary: Destination of Leavers

- The vast majority of graduates from academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13 were in some form employment at the time of the survey (82% and 83% respectively). This equates to 3,600 from 2011-12 and around 3,800 from 2012-13.
- A smaller percentage were combining work with study (4% in 2011-12, 5% in 2012-13) and around 1% of graduates from each year were engaged in study only.
- An estimated 53% of 2011-12 graduates and 58% of 2012-13 graduates went on to work as a social worker. These proportions equate to 2,300 newly qualified social workers in 2011-12 and around 2,700 in 2012-13.
- Data on NQSWs from Skills for Care, Department for Education and Children's workforce Development Council is found to be supportive of estimates of NQSWs derived from HESA data.
- An estimated 1,200 in 2011-12 and 1,100 in 2012-13 (27% and 23% respectively) went on to work in a health and/or social care-related job.
- The 'conversion rate' from social work education graduates to NQSWs (between 53% and 58%) could suggest that there is a surplus of social workers being trained, i.e. there is not enough demand for social workers in the social care sector to employ all graduates.
- Students gaining postgraduate qualifications were more likely to go on to work as social workers (between 61% and 62%) than those achieving at undergraduate level (between 52% and 56%). Conversely, undergraduates were more likely to go on to work in a health- or care-related field (25%) than postgraduates (between 17% and 21%).
- Graduates aged from 24 to 29 (61%) and 30 to 39 (60%) were the most likely to go on to work as social workers. Graduates aged under 24 and 50 or over were most likely to be unemployed or working in a role not related to social care (22% and 25% respectively) than those aged between 24 and 49 years.
- British graduates were more likely to be working as a social worker six months after graduation (57%) than were graduates from the EEA (52%) or from outside of Europe (41%). Conversely, graduates with a non-EEA nationality were more likely to be unemployed or working in a role not related to social care (36%) than those of EEA (24%) or British (19%) nationality.
- Evidence suggests that graduates who are unable to find work as a social worker may take on a health or care related job instead, possibly as a means to gain work experience in social care.

Summary

Based on the information discussed in this report, conclusions can be drawn about social work higher education in terms of student enrolments, qualifiers, attrition rates and the destination of leavers after graduation.

There has been an overall decline in the number of enrolments to social work education courses leading to HCPC registration from 5,620 to 4,620 between the academic years 2009-10 and 2012-13, despite a slight increase between 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Undergraduate enrolments have shown a decrease in each of the reported years, averaging 340 fewer each year. Undergraduate enrolments make up the majority of the total each year (between 64% and 71%). Some of those students enrolling on a postgraduate course may already be registered as social workers. Around nine in ten students enrol on a full time basis.

The demographic profile of students enrolling on social work higher education courses is comparable to that of social workers working in adult social care. The majority of enrolling students were female (83%). Between 68% and 74% of enrolling students were of white ethnicity and around 90% were British. The average age of enrolling students was around 30 years old over the reported period. This relatively high starting age suggests that individuals may take up social work education as a career change. Students under the age of 24 make up only a third of all enrolments.

Of those students who enrol on a course leading to HCPC registration, around 6% fail to complete the course (i.e. they leave the course before their expected leaving date). These students may leave for academic failure, personal reasons or other reasons in roughly equal measure (2% each). The remaining 94% complete their course duration and of these, the vast majority achieve the qualification set out in their course aim. A small proportion of students leave education with a qualification lower than that set out in their course aim such as institutional credits or evidence of passed modules. This is more common for postgraduate than undergraduate students

There were 4,640 leavers from social work education who were newly eligible to register as a social worker in 2009-10. This figure decreased for the following two years before increasing in 2012-13 to 4,610. This equates to between 93% and 95% of students leaving education with a qualification leading to HCPC registration. The majority of leavers achieved an undergraduate qualification (between 3,100 and 3,520 over the reported period) and between 1,120 and 1,370 gained a postgraduate qualification. Between 5% and 7% of all leavers left each year without obtaining a qualification (between 250 and 350 students). The only factor that was found to affect a student's likelihood of qualification was their age. Students who left education aged younger than 24 were less likely to gain a qualification (85% to 91%) than those aged 24 or over (93% to 97%).

The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey was used to study the activities of social work leavers six months after graduation. Around eight out of ten graduates were in some form of employment at this time. It was estimated that the proportion of graduates who were working as a social worker six months after graduation was 53% in 2011-12 and 58% in 2012-13. This equates to 2,300 newly qualified social workers in 2011-12 and around

2,700 in 2012-13. These figures were found to be similar to NQSW information collected by Skills for Care and the Department for Education. This 'conversion rate' from social work education graduates to NQSWs may be indicative of a surplus of social workers being trained. Around a quarter of graduates were working in a care-related role six months after graduation. This could indicate that graduates who are unable to find work as a social worker take on a health or care related job instead, possibly as a means to gain work experience in social care. Those students gaining a postgraduate qualification were more likely to be employed as social workers six months after graduation (between 61% and 62%) than those achieving at undergraduate level (between 52% and 56%). Conversely, undergraduates were more likely to go on to work in a health- or care-related field (25%) than postgraduates (between 17% and 21%). The age of graduates at the time of leaving was also found to affect their destination after leaving education. Graduates aged from 24 to 29 (61%) and 30 to 39 (60%) were the most likely to go on to work as social workers, those under 24 being the least likely. This may be because younger graduates have less work experience.

Taken together, the information presented in this report demonstrates that there is a discrepancy between the numbers of students entering and leaving social work education and those finding employment as a social worker after graduation. Although it is acknowledged that the 'conversion rates' of 53% to 58% are based on a snapshot six months after graduation and that some graduates may find employment as social workers after this time, the relatively high proportion of graduates working in another health- or care-related role suggests that the supply of trained social workers may be too high. This is supported by the evidence showing that younger graduates and those with an undergraduate (rather than postgraduate) qualification are more likely to be working in a care-related role rather than as a social worker. In the context of a limited number of available social worker roles, these candidates may be less desirable to employers than older graduates with more work experience or those with a postgraduate qualification.

Published by Skills for Care, West Gate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds, LS1 2RP
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This report has been published using data on social work education in England, collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

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