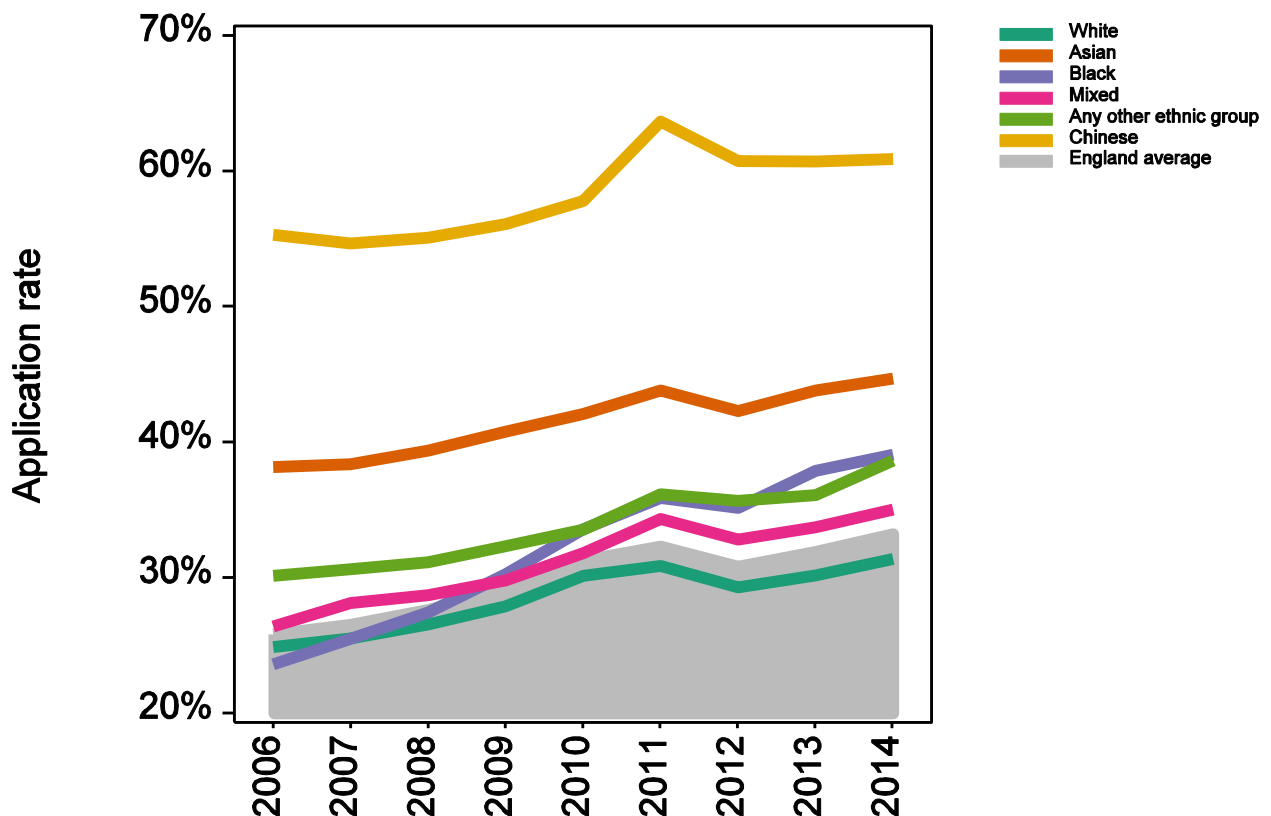# Demand for higher education rises amongst all ethnic groups in English schools in 2014 setting new highs for most groups

Pupil records in English state schools allow precise measures of application rates by major ethnic group. The application rates of all ethnic groups increased in 2014. The highest application rate in 2014 was for the Chinese group (61 per cent) and the lowest for the White group (31 per cent).

Figure 1: Application rates of 18 year olds in England by ethnic group

Six major ethnic groups are identified through pupil records at state schools in England. These groups vary in their share of the population from White (82 per cent of the population) through Asian (8 per cent), Black (5 per cent), Mixed (4 per cent), Any other ethnic group (1 per cent) to Chinese (less than 1 per cent). The share of pupils across these groups has changed over the period: the proportion in the White group has fallen from 87 per cent to 82 per cent of pupils, and the proportion in the Asian, Black and Mixed groups have increased by around 2 percentage points each.

Application rates increased in 2014 for all ethnic groups. The application rate for the White ethnic group increased by 1.2 percentage points to 31.4 per cent, the Mixed group to 35.0 per cent (a 1.3 percentage point increase), Any other ethnic group to 38.7 per cent (2.6 percentage points), Black to 39.0 per cent (1.1 percentage points) and Asian to 44.7 per cent (0.9 percentage points). The application rates for all of these groups were at their highest recorded levels in 2014. The application rate of the Chinese group increased slightly (by 0.2 percentage points to 60.9 per cent) but with the relatively small population size (around 2,200) this is not statistically significant.

Application rates for all groups are higher in 2014 than in 2006 with the largest increase being for the Black ethnic group (from 23.6 per cent to 39.0 per cent). A combination of increases in both population and application rates means there are twice as many 18 year old applicants in 2014 than 2006 for the Black, Mixed and Any other ethnic group.

Application rates to higher education have a strong relationship with GCSE attainment. Amongst pupils with higher GCSE results differences in application rates by ethnic group are generally smaller than for in the population as a whole. Differences in application rates by ethnic group amongst those with lower GCSE results are generally larger than for the population as a whole.

Technical notes

1. Ages are defined as those on the 31 August each year to align with school cohorts. The graph shows the application rate for cohorts of 18 year olds against the year in which they would be 18. For example the 2014 point on the graph relates to the application rate of young people who will be aged 18 on 31 August 2014 and have applied in the 2014 UCAS application cycle. Their GCSE attainment is that achieved at the end of the school year two years earlier (in the 2011-12 school year for the 2014 cohort in this example).

2. Application rates are based on applications made to UCAS by the 24 March deadline in each cycle. At this point almost all main scheme applications for 18 year olds have been received.

3. The analysis is based on individual level school pupil records, taken from the National Pupil Database (NPD, further information on the NPD can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-pupil-database) linked to UCAS application data. The NPD covers young people in England only. Only records where a pupil's ethnicity is known are used. The NPD records the ethnicity of pupils who attend maintained schools in England but does not record it for pupils in non-maintained schools, of which the majority attend independent schools

4. GCSE attainment is summarised as the total point score of the best eight grades achieved at GCSE (single and double award non-vocational GCSEs only) at the end of the school year where the pupil was aged 16. The point score does not include any GCSE results obtained after this period. There is wide variation in the GCSE attainment of young people. For example, around one in ten attain eight A grades or higher and a similar proportion achieve eight G grades or lower.

   The point scores for each GCSE grade are given in the table below.

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U/X/Q
Point score	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

5. The difference in application rates across ethnic groups was calculated for those with similar GCSE attainment. These differences were calculated across a set of reference best eight GCSE point scores (from those with a point score of 16, equivalent to eight F grades at GCSE, through to those with a point score of 64, equivalent to eight A* grades at GCSE). Pupils with point scores within a couple of points of these reference values were included in the band. Only the White, Asian, Black and Mixed groups have sufficient population size to support this analysis by GCSE point band.

   For the band centred on 56 points (for example, eight A grades) the application rates of the different ethnic groups lie in a narrow range within 1 percentage point of 78 per cent in 2014. For the band centred on 32 points (equivalent to eight D grades but more typically a combination of five grades at C or above with other lower grades) the application rates in 2014 ranged from 18 per cent for the White group to 38 per cent for the Black group.

6. The population size, number of UCAS applicants and the application rate for 2006 and 2014 are given in the table below (counts rounded to nearest ten, application rate on unrounded figures).

Ethnic group	2006 cohort			2014 cohort		
	Population	Applicants	Application rate (%)	Population	Applicants	Application rate (%)
White	494,360	122,820	24.8	457,610	143,910	31.4
Asian	36,450	13,900	38.1	44,560	19,910	44.7
Black	19,850	4,680	23.6	26,230	10,240	39.0
Mixed	11,470	3,030	26.4	20,340	7,120	35.0
Any other ethnic group	4,480	1,350	30.1	6,910	2,670	38.7
Chinese	2,150	1,190	55.3	2,230	1,360	60.9
England average	568,760	146,970	25.8	557,870	185,210	33.2

7. A data file for the data points shown in Figure 1 is available with this analysis note at http://www.ucas.com/data-analysis.