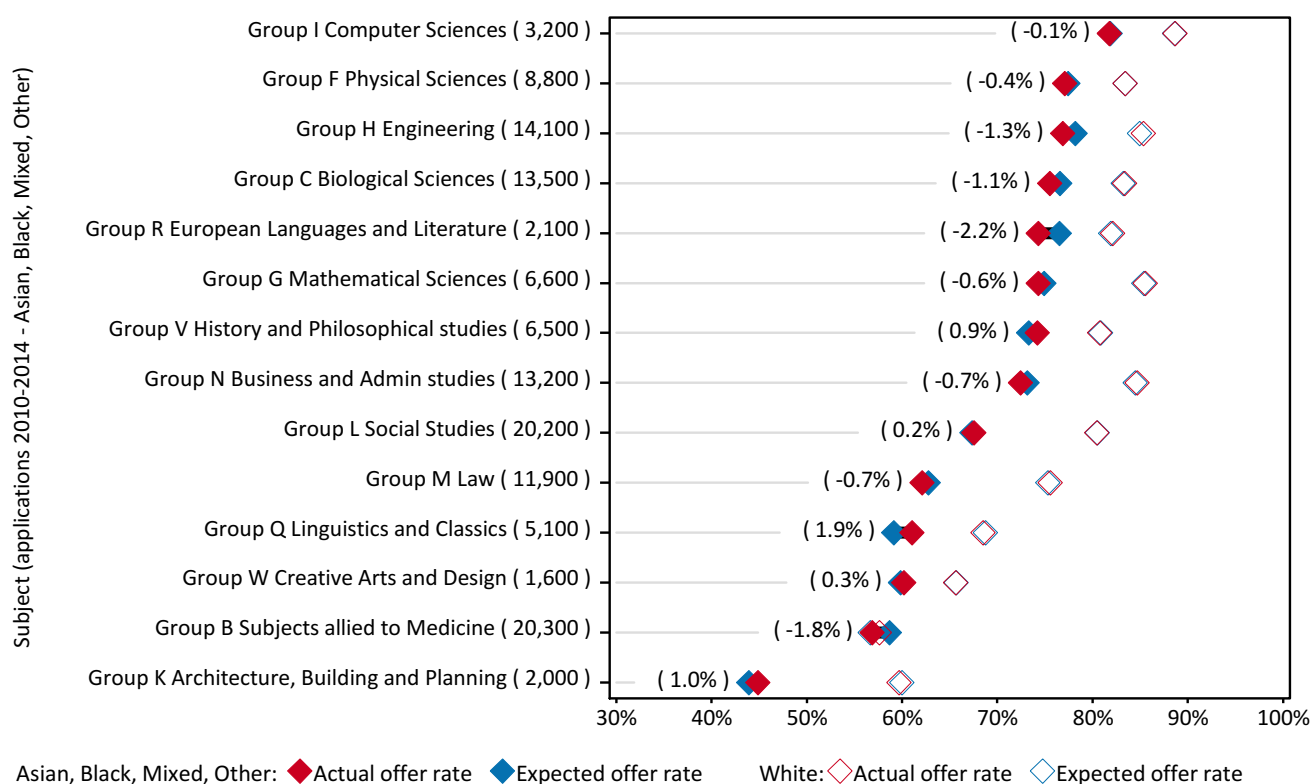# Offer rates to different ethnic groups close to expected values

The offer rate from higher tariff universities to White applicants is higher than to applicants from the Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups. However, offer rates vary widely by the predicted grades held, the subject applied to, and, in particular, the university applied to. An 'expected' offer rate can be calculated that reflects these variations.

The 'expected' offer rate to Asian, Black, Mixed and Other applicants is lower than to White applicants. This reflects that (for the same strength of predicted grades) Asian, Black, Mixed and Other applicants are more likely to apply to those higher tariff universities and courses that have lower offer rates. Most of the difference in actual offer rates between ethnic groups is accounted for by these different application patterns. Actual offer rates to Asian, Black, Mixed and Other applicants are close to what would be expected (from the predicted grades they hold and the courses they apply to), ranging from two percentage points higher than expected, to two percentage points lower than expected.

Figure 1: Actual and expected offer rates by subject group from English higher tariff providers to applications made between 2010 and 2014 from England domiciled 18 year olds studying for higher grade A levels

To be placed in higher education through UCAS, an applicant must first receive an offer from the course that they have applied to. Amongst young English applicants[1] applying to higher tariff providers[2] the offer rate to the White ethnic group is higher than to the Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups[3] in every subject area.

The proportion of applications that receive an offer varies substantially by provider, subject applied to, and the predicted grades of the applicant. A simple 'expected' offer rate can be calculated[4] by using the average offer rates for all applications to the same set of courses with the same strength of predicted grades. This statistic can help distinguish whether different offer rates by ethnic groups relate to the pattern of applications made by applicants, or to a difference in offer making to ethnic groups by providers that is not explained by the strength of predicted grades alone.

The expected offer rates differ between ethnic groups in each subject area. These differences in *expected* offer rates are similar to the differences in *actual* offer rates, indicating that the different patterns of applications between ethnic groups (shown by the *expected* rates) account for most of the differences in *actual* offer rates between ethnic groups.

The actual offer rates to applicants in the Asian, Black, Mixed or Other group are close to the expected offer rates. This shows that Asian, Black, Mixed or Other group applicants have a chance of receiving an offer similar to that for all applicants (to the same courses with the same predicted grades). The actual offer rate is slightly (one to two percentage points) lower than expected in four subject areas, and slightly higher than expected in two subject areas.

Technical notes

1. This analysis is based on a large set of applicants with a consistent set of application characteristics, to help make a reliable like-for-like comparison between different groups. The applicants in the analysis are:

    a. 18 year olds domiciled in England applying to UCAS for the first time (so that A levels are overwhelmingly predicted rather than already achieved),
    b. made the full set of five applications,
    c. applied before the main 15 January deadline (but after the 15 October deadline),
    d. applied to courses at higher tariff providers in England,
    e. applied for immediate entry (not deferred),
    f. studying for A levels at the time of application with total predicted A level points from up to their best three grades totalling between 10 and 17 points (BCC to A*A*A), those predicted 18 points from their best three A levels are excluded to avoid predicted ability being censored by the measure
    g. go on to achieve A levels with points in the range 6 to 18 (DDD to A*A*A*),
    h. and not holding BTEC qualifications, SQA qualifications or International Baccalaureate by the end of the cycle (so that the assessment of predicted A level points captures the available information).

2. Higher tariff providers are covered in this note as they show the greatest differentiation in offer rates by predicted grades. Actual and expected offer rates are reported in addition for medium and lower tariff providers in the detailed data file.

3. Some ethnic groups are aggregated for the purpose of this analysis. Although application rates for the individual groups are higher than for the White ethnic group (see UCAS Analysis note 2014/01), small population counts relative to the White group lead to relatively small numbers of applicants in the individual data cells. Applications from five application years (2010-2014) are also combined, maximising the information available for estimating the course level offer rates and the reliability of the results.

4. The expected offer rates are the weighted combination of the average offer rates observed for all applicants (within the definition scope) with the same profile of predicted grades and courses applied to. For each predicted A level point score (10 to 17 points) of applications to each detailed subject group within each higher tariff provider we define the average offer rate as the total number of offers made over the five year period as a proportion of the number of all applications (within the data scope) to these courses. The expected offer rate for a reported applicant group is the combination of these average offer rates weighted by the number of applications from the applicant group. It represents the offer rate that would expected if the predicted grades summary from the best three A levels was the only factor that influenced whether an applicant was made an offer or not for a detailed subject area at a provider.

5. The expected offer rates in this analysis are based only on the average offer rates across these three factors (detailed subject group applied for, provider applied for, summary measure of predicted grades from best three predicted A levels). They do not account for any other factors that may play a part in the decision to make an offer, such as the subject of the A levels studied, their relevance to a course, of the grade in each subject; higher numbers of A levels being studied; the exact profile of grades predicted; personal statements; teacher references; interviews; or any other criteria (such as work experience or portfolios) that may be part of the admissions decision.

6. Figure 1 shows the results for subject groups that do not include combined subjects and for where at least 1000 applications in total were received by higher tariff providers from the Asian, Black, Mixed and Other group over the five year period. A reusable data file for the data points shown in Figure 1 is available with this analysis note at http://www.ucas.com/data-analysis.

7. A further reusable data file, containing the detailed data for applications, offer rates and expected offer rates is provide with this analysis note at http://www.ucas.com/data-analysis. This contains the detailed data by tariff group of provider, by subject group, by predicted grade, by ethnic group combinations. All data lines which represent over 100 applications in total between 2010 and 2014 are included.