

FROM THE MINISTER



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AQW 21522/11-15

Mr Swann has asked:

To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students with a disability have been enrolled in Higher Education Institutions over the last five years, broken down by disability type.

ANSWER

The table overleaf details the number of students at Northern Ireland (NI) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from 2007/08 to 2011/12 who declared having a disability, based upon their own self assessment, broken down by disability type.

Information on disability is collected on the basis of a student's own self assessment. Students are not obliged to report a disability and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) therefore advises that the figures reported based upon disability analyses may not be representative of the total student population.

It is important to note that HESA's disability coding frame changed in 2010/11, and this involved a change to the wording of the disability categories and the number of categories recorded. The universities' data collection methodologies

also changed significantly in 2008/09, with the introduction of online admission systems and the switch from a paper disability questionnaire to an online questionnaire. There were also small differences between the Northern Ireland HE Institutions in the way that the HESA disability coding frame was presented to students in these new admission systems. There is no standard implementation guide for the disability questions across all HE institutions in the United Kingdom. The University of Ulster also highlighted some technical difficulties in the implementation of the new systems. As a result the figures below are not directly comparable on a year by year basis.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Farry', is positioned above the printed name.

DR STEPHEN FARRY MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning

Disability type	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	210	160	190	225	240
A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	1175	1045	1020	1095	1110
A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	30	25	30	145	235
A long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	540	705	455	480	455
A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	185	225	260	310	335
A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	175	110	110	155	150
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	250	160	135	150	100
Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	360	115	70	95	85
Personal care support.	30	10	5	0	0
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	505	200	375	365	400
Total	3465	2745	2650	3025	3100

Source: HESA

Notes:

1. Figures in the table are rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding the sum of columns may not match the totals shown.
2. The latest available data are for 2011/12.