Admitting otherwise:
Diversity work, contextuality and the future of anthropology

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Abstract

The difficult work of decolonizing UK anthropology teaches us important lessons about our field. Rethinking the curriculum may be the easy part. Making university admissions fairer is a harder task. The biggest challenge of all is transforming the institutional cultures and demographic profile of anthropology's students and faculty. The Covid-19 pandemic showed that rapid change is possible: its aftermath is an opportunity for more radical rethinking of this diversity work in anthropology.

Many UK universities currently use 'contextual' information about undergraduate applicants to make admissions 'fairer'. Would a more self-reflective understanding of 'contextuality' include the institutional contexts of universities themselves? Most social anthropology departments are found in 'Russell group' and 'Sutton-30' universities. Their student populations are more likely to be able-bodied, white, female and middle class than those in other universities: these students have a disproportionate opportunity to access PhD research funding. The growth in postgraduate education also exacerbates these differences. This paper combines institutional history and student data to reconceputalise and broaden debates around 'contextual admissions'. Acknowledging the institutional racism within UK universities, a more encompassing definition of 'contextuality' would allow a critical attention to the academic cultures that create barriers to widening participation, retention and progression to postgraduate study.

Keywords: Contextual admissions, access, postgraduate study, decolonising.

Introduction

Most academics welcome the opening up of opportunities for university study. Yet the rapid growth in UK university undergraduate student numbers over the last three decades has had many unintended consequences. In a 'high participation system' (Marginson 2017) higher education can become highly stratified. The steep gradient of reputational prestige between UK universities is partly produced by universities seeking to 'sift and sort', but also by families who seek to work the system to their own advantage (ibid, 34). This reproduces class disparities through differential access to jobs and graduate opportunities. (Wakeling and Savage 2015). The rise in postgraduate study that accompanies undergraduate expansion also widens social inequalities (Wakeling and Laurence 2017).

Today the social composition of the UK's universities – by class, ethnicity, and social background – is highly differentiated by institution. The media has tended to focus on the inequalities of Oxbridge admissions, and particularly numbers of black and working-class students and staff. The inequalities created around postgraduate study are less discussed. Students who have graduated from elite Russell Group universities are much more likely to be able to get funding for a PhD, the first step in an academic career (Wakeling and Pazstor 2018).[i] Black students make up only 1.2% of all those with Research Council funding (Williams et al 2019). These disparities are reflected within anthropology, and are deeply damaging for a discipline that aspires to a diverse, multicultural and decolonized future. A field that claims expertise in the study of diversity (Hannerz 2010) could do much more to reflect on institutional racism within UK universities (Universities UK 2020), and its own institutional entanglements and complicities.

In recent years the 'high-tariff' universities have championed 'contextual admissions': the use of contextual data and information in making decisions about undergraduate applicants (Boliver et al 2017). The aim is to identify applicants with the greatest potential to succeed in higher education, rather than just making offers to those with

top exam results (OfS 2019). This contextual information can include individual data (e.g. if the applicant is a care leaver), postcode data, school data, intersectional data (UCAS has a multidimensional measure of deprivation) and information on whether the applicant has participated in outreach activities or summer schools. Yet universities use this information inconsistently, and often in a binary way, rather than developing a more personalized approach. It is perhaps not surprising that, despite some progress, advantaged students are still five times more likely to be admitted to high tariff universities (UCAS 2019).

In this essay I go beyond admissions to explore the other contexts that shape the demographic diversity of anthropology students and staff within UK universities. For a discipline in which context is everything, anthropology is well placed to reflect on the 'contextuality' (Dilley 2002) of higher education, and all the different 'contexts' that shape students and their learning journeys. Some contexts are easier to measure, and turn into targets, than others. Others are unacknowledged or invisible.

Fair admissions, with a nuanced attention to individual student backgrounds and family contexts, is an important place to start. Yet academic cultures, histories and politics ultimately constrain the success of widening participation initiatives. Admissions is only one aspect of effective student support. This is why change can be so difficult to enact. It makes 'contextuality' a valuable intellectual resource in the study of diversity 'work' (Ahmed 2017). Context matters at every stage. Are non-traditional students inspired at school through mentoring and academic role models they can identify with? Are they supported through summer schools and foundation years, helped with the transition to university, given financial advice, and helped throughout the degree and beyond? And what of the university itself? Does it promote a culture of inclusion and learning? Does it use its race equality audit to develop meaningful targets and address under-representation of particular groups? Thomas (2018) advocates a 'whole institution approach' and the need for a deliberate approach to both cultural and structural change'. Ropek (2019) goes further in calling for positive action, including targeted evidence-based interventions that acknowledge and pro-actively address aspects of structural racism.

This paper takes up this call for holism and transformational change. It begins with institutional history, before exploring the gender, class and ethnicity of anthropology students in the UK today. It goes on discuss the limited success of current admissions initiatives, and the importance of acknowledging structural barriers and championing a more radical approach to 'contextuality'. The turbulence and uncertainty around student numbers and universities' financial viability created by the Covid19 pandemic makes this a fast-moving policy debate. The Office for Students (OfS), the sector regulator, is poised to set universities ever tougher targets, making this an important moment to reflect, debate and act.

Contexts that matter: institutional histories and the politics of reform

The history of British universities is also the history of the political struggle to open up access. Examples include the nineteenth century 'university extension movement', the fraught campaign to allow women into Oxbridge, and the recommendations of the 1963 Robbins report to create a new suite of universities. With the unification of the university sector in 1992 and the massive expansion in university places since 2000, fair access for all students has become a major policy concern for the sector.

The institutional history of social anthropology within the oldest UK universities partly explains the demographic challenges it now faces. Anthropology was first taught at Oxford, Cambridge and UCL in the late nineteenth century. The pioneers of social anthropology - including Bronislaw Malinowski who took up his LSE lectureship in 1924, and A.R Radcliffe-Brown who was appointed to an Oxford professorship in 1938 – were keen to create a distinct academic identity for their new 'science'. After the second world war their students founded a scholarly professional association – initially entitled the Association of Social Anthropology – to act as a gatekeeper for the nascent sub-discipline. Wary of amateurs, administrators and evolutionists, the association restricted membership to social anthropologists with posts in UK or 'dominion' universities, carefully vetting applicants and infamously 'blackballing' some (Mills 2008). The value provided by a shared intellectual focus was accompanied by a reluctance to expand the discipline too fast, and the new field of sociology rapidly overtook anthropology in popularity, especially in the newer universities and amongst students conscientized by the 1960s. Today, there are still only 20 or so social anthropology departments in the UK, mostly in the Russell Group or highly-selective 'Sutton 30' universities. Think of Durham, Manchester, LSE, UCL, Edinburgh and St Andrews, not to mention Oxbridge. Anthropology's current demographics is shaped by its institutional evolution.

The creation of a unified UK higher education sector in 1992 enabled polytechnic colleges to become universities. In response, a select group of the oldest research-led universities created their own lobbying group, named after the Russell Square Hotel where they first met in 1994. Regular UK research assessment exercises, the power of global university rankings, and middle-class families encouraging their children to 'aim ever higher' have all reinforced fine-grained status distinctions between departments and universities, as well as creating ever more inequalities within the sector.

The current policy and research attention to 'widening participation' began with the publication of the Dearing report in 1997 (Kettley 2007). Prime Minister Tony Blair set an ambition for 50% of young people benefitting from university education. One consequence of a 'high participation' university system is that it exacerbates competition for a fixed number of social outputs. Qualitative distinctions in educational experience replace quantitative differences in educational attainment. Paradoxically, higher education expansion can thus widen social inequalities, because one's ability to access social capital becomes even more important. As Marginson (2017) notes, expansion allows middle-class families with prior social advantage to capitalize on their opportunities, rather than solving existing social inequalities in university access.

The statistics on class and university admissions remain challenging. In 2014-15, 65 % of private school students entered one of the top third most selective universities, compared to 23 % of state school students (Sundorph et al 2017). Whilst there has been progress, the majority of universities regularly miss their target benchmarks (Sundorph et al 2017).

There is a growing sociological literature on meritocratic admissions policies, nuancing understandings of access (Zimdar-Mountford 2016, Zimdar-Mountford and Harrison 2017). There is also ever more data on which to draw. Universities have used 'contextual information' on applicants (home postcodes, school performance) to inform their widening participation policies. The evidence to support this practice is strong and has grown over the years (Fair Education Alliance 2018).

Access is about much more than admissions, or the now discredited concept of 'raising aspiration' (Harrison and Walker 2019). It is also about continuation, degree outcomes, employability and access to postgraduate opportunities. Many working-class students struggle to 'belong' within a socially elitist institution, and can feel alienated by the dominant middle-class student cultures they encounter in Russell Group universities (Reay 2017). Whilst contextual admissions has led to lower offers for students from deprived backgrounds, the cultures of academia – and even the middle-class expectation that one should study and live away from home – can reproduce the normative sense of the university as a white, middle-class space. Research on regional ethnic diversity and its relationship to university composition (Donnelly and Gamsu 2018, Gamsu and Donnelly 2017) emphasizes the role played by locality and geographical loyalty (Donnelly and Evans 2015) in university choices for students in some parts of the UK, and reveal contrasting attitudes to student mobility by ethnicity. Drawing on anthropological understandings of personhood, Hawkins and Mills (2010) point to the particular difficulties working class students face in negotiating an identity that acknowledges the importance of home and family relationships. Anthropological pedagogies that start by encouraging students to deconstruct their identities can be destabilising for some.

What sense can we make of student data?

We live in an increasingly data-driven world, and the central role accorded to universities in debates about social equality means that there is now a dizzying amount of demographic data about higher education students and their backgrounds. The data is always partial and approximate, and changing attitudes to disciplinary classification make subject-level analysis difficult, especially for a small field like anthropology. Big picture trends – such as the proportion of undergraduates from BAME backgrounds in universities increasing 7.5% since 2010-11 (OfS 2019) – belie marked differences by university and subject studied. In this section I discuss student demographic data published by the UK HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) and the challenges the current situation poses for transforming the profile of anthropology's undergraduate and postgraduate communities.

How many students study anthropology in the UK? Anyone can use the HESA website to look at the most recent national data for the discipline, usually published in January for the previous academic year. Very roughly, in 2018-19, there are just under 6000 students listed as studying Anthropology courses. 1,800 are non-UK nationals. Most of these students (approx. 4,100) are classified as studying L600 (Anthropology) but around a

quarter (1700) are classified as L610 (Social and Cultural Anthropology). Only 200 are studying biological anthropology, amounting to just 3-4% of all students. Of this 6000, around 1000 are Masters students on one-year courses, and another 1000 are PhD students. About 200 students start an anthropology PhD each year, and most take at least three or four years to complete, and some much longer. This leaves an estimated 4000 undergraduate anthropology students (of all nationalities), or around 1,300 new starters each year.

What these broad headline figures don't show is where students are being admitted, or the longer-term trends in the discipline. This is where sites such as [WonkHE](#) proves invaluable. WonkHE is an online forum for commentators, data-hackers and higher education policy 'wonks' (the policy equivalent of a geek), and their work offers both powerful data visualisations and critical insight. Kernohan (2020) offers a detailed [analysis](#) of UCAS 'end of cycle' data, showing admission trends by institution and institutional group. Data on subject acceptances show how the Russell Group institutions offer the great majority of places in Group L (all social studies). From 2012 to 2019, the number of students studying Group L subjects in Russell Group institutions increased from 11,000 to 15,000, with the lifting of the numbers cap. This is an almost 40% growth in students, more marked than for any other subject group. These institutions have the highest A level requirements, and so these places are unlikely to be awarded to 'access' candidates.

Higher Education Researchers can request access to the underlying HESA datasets for analysis and planning purposes. I used this data to explore individual institution and course data by ethnicity. Creating league tables or comparing individual institutions with this data is frowned upon, but I found a clear rise in anthropology student admissions by the Russell Group elite institutions in the years up to 2018, and a decline in applications to anthropology departments in newer or less prestigious universities.

Around half of anthropology places are currently at 'high-tariff' Russell Group universities. Most of the rest are in 'Sutton 30' institutions. My analysis of HESA data suggests an almost 50% growth in total anthropology undergraduate numbers at Russell Group universities from 2013 to 2018. This compares to a 14% increase in the overall student population at these universities. The most recent UCAS data for 2019 suggests that that this increase has now levelled off and that numbers are beginning to decline. Covid will also have affected these trends.

Why this sudden increase? After gradually moving away from centralized planning and allocation of student places to English universities, the UK government completely lifted the 'numbers cap' in 2015.[ii] The move disproportionately benefited Russell Group universities, as they were able to expand and attract more strong students (and so benefit from their tuition fees). Growth was easiest in the humanities and social sciences where there were fewer limitations to expansion, such as the need for bench space in laboratories. This recruitment left other non-Russell Group universities, including those with a strong history of recruiting non-traditional students (such as SOAS and Kent), struggling to sustain their numbers.

Undergraduate student numbers in anthropology departments outside of the research elite are stable or declining. Several well-known departments in 'pre-92' universities were hit hard by these trends. New anthropology departments in post-92 universities have also been set up, offering BA degrees (including at Bournemouth, Essex, Plymouth and Winchester), competing for students who may wish to study locally.

HESA data allows a careful analysis of nationality and ethnicity data (of UK students) by subject group within Russell Group universities (Boliver 2015). In 2002, UK nationals made up 90% of 2400 students. In 2017 around 80% of approximately 3400 anthropology undergraduates were UK nationals. Of this group, around 1050 chose not to reveal their ethnicity. Of the remaining 2300 British anthropology students, 2000 identified as white, and about 350 declared an ethnicity (just under 15%). Of this group, 50 identified themselves as black (either of African or Caribbean descent), or 2% of the whole cohort. Only 15 were of Caribbean descent, making up 0.6% of the cohort, compared to more than 1.2% of the total British population within this cohort. This shows the importance of breaking down ethnicity classifications to understand the contrasting experiences of different black British and British Asian communities (Boliver 2016). The 15% figure compares with more than 20% of anthropology students who self-identified as BAME at non-Russell Group universities. It shows that an anthropology degree is particularly attractive to white middle-class children, or, conversely, that the subject deters non-white students. This is not just a problem for anthropology. The Sociology departments of the 'Sutton 30' group fare little better, with around 900 BAME students of more than 6400 undergraduates (or 14.4%), and again very few British students of Caribbean descent. This narrow social and class composition of students is visible in all the social sciences at Russell Group universities. According to HESA statistics, history is particularly

'white', with only 11% of students self-identifying as BAME in Russell Group universities, as is Geography. The challenge for admissions tutors is to attract students beyond the 'narrowest and poshest social profiles' (Dorling 2019).

Attempts to diversify anthropology can only do so much to mitigate the effects of university admissions policies. In the UK, the discipline has a track-record on outreach that stretches back to the antiracism work of the Royal Anthropological Institute in the 1970s (Mills 2017). In the early 2000s, the Institute appointed an education officer, promoted outreach events, including AimHigher and London Anthropology Day (Basu 2008), and started on the long journey towards accrediting an A level, finally achieved in 2010 (Bennett 2011, Mills and Bennett 2016). But the timing was deeply inopportune. Michael Gove was determined to make his mark as Education Secretary, and abetted by Dominic Cummings, carried out a major restructuring of A level assessment and provision. The Exam Boards' subsequent decision to terminate the qualification (Mills and Bennett 2016), and the removal of funding for Access courses within Further Education (Wemyss 2012), meant fewer opportunities for students to encounter the discipline in schools or FE colleges (Basu 2016). Anthropology remains an option only within the IB diploma curriculum, ensuring that those who encounter the field before university are likely to be in a select group of state and private schools that aspire to the 'global middle class' (Wright & Lee 2019). This all has intellectual consequences for the dynamism of our field. A decolonized 'curriculum' is not simply a matter of changing the canon: it is enacted by the perspectives offered by a diverse community of students.

As the middle classes (and selective, grammar and private schools) work ever harder to ensure their children get places at the 'best' university, fragmented widening participation initiatives have only limited impact (Harrison and Waller 2017a, 2017b, Boliver 2017). By itself, postcode data is inaccurate and unhelpful (Harrison and McCaig 2015). Calls for more 'radical' change in the use of contextual admissions at UK's 'top' universities (Boliver et al 2017, Boliver 2019) are now supported by the new regulator (OfS2019). In 2017 only 18 of the 30 most selective universities in Britain reduce entry requirements for 'contextually disadvantaged' applicants, typically by just one or two grades" (HEPI 2017). This may not be enough. In 2018, the OfS announced 'tougher targets' in an access "shake up". Voluntary targets may eventually be replaced by admissions quotas. Some go further and call for comprehensive universities (Blackman 2017), arguing that all forms of academic selection produce social stratification. A few have even proposed an admissions lottery.

A key focus at undergraduate level has been on developing more nuanced approaches to measuring 'context'. Boliver et al (2017) argues that 'there remains significant scope for greater contextualisation at most selective universities', and that 'this could result in a substantial increase in their numbers of low-income students'. More use of significantly lower A-level offers, individual-level contextual indicators, and additional support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds would all help. Offers sometimes depend on completing institutional access programmes or summer schools. The evidence is mixed, and so these initiatives need to be carefully targeted, monitored and evaluated. But it is not just admissions: tailored support is important throughout the undergraduate life course. There is some evidence of success of contextualised admissions practices and foundation degrees at Newcastle, Bristol, Exeter and Birmingham (Boliver et al 2017). Scotland has made the most of devolution of education policy to develop an ambitious set of targets for widening access, and most universities use a range of contextual indicators. The publication of the Commission on Widening Access (Scottish Government 2016) has led the country's universities to adopt a framework for fair access, and Scotland's Commissioner on Fair Access regularly reports on progress towards targets and the use of data on deprivation.

Pushing for change in postgraduate admissions and support

Amidst this focus on undergraduate access, there is a neglected policy challenge: the composition of the UK postgraduate community. Faced with undergraduate debt, studying for a doctorate is only possible with scholarship funding. For the rest, as Pásztor (2015) notes, the PhD is a 'rich man's game'. In total, there are probably less than 100 anthropology studentships available each year, and these will often go to those with outstanding undergraduate records within those departments. The statistical evidence (Wakeling and Hampden-Thompson 2013) shows that graduates from the top 30 universities make up 70% of those progressing to postgraduate research. Around 4.5% of 'Sutton Trust 30' students progress onto postgraduate research, compared to less than 1 % of students outside this elite group of 30 institutions. It becomes ever harder to cross the tracks, and move from a post-92 to an elite university for graduate study.

Recent work (Wakeling and Laurison 2017) suggests that students with working-class-origins in the youngest age-group are only about 28 per cent as likely to obtain a postgraduate degree when compared with their peers from privileged origins. Social origin shapes occupational destination even more for those in younger age groups. The expansion of postgraduate degrees might actually be reproducing socio-economic inequality. Williams et al (2019) powerfully describe the 'broken pipeline' that leads to so few black students being offered PhD funding.

A key challenge to postgraduate admissions reform is the difficulty of defining widening participation at postgraduate level, beyond the broad principle of equal opportunities to pursue research, regardless of social background, or first university (Pásztor and Wakeling 2018). Beyond postcodes or parental income, the relevant 'contexts' at PGR level include the very different academic opportunities offered to undergraduates by their universities. Not every academic has the time to write glowing references or ensure students benefit from their own academic networks. Universities offer very different opportunities to their students, whether academic prizes, exchange opportunities, research experience or student leadership positions. A thoughtful approach to postgraduate contextuality would highlight the challenge of comparing students with different amounts of work experience and at different academic stages. Is it right to define academic potential by the institution and class of one's first degree?

Beyond academic success, how do postgraduate admissions committees value the research and professional competencies (not to mention life skills) gained from working in non-academic environments? Mature students can bring a great deal of 'real world' research leadership experience into a disciplinary community, whether in government, business or the third sector. The doctoral community, and the discipline as a whole, can only benefit from a greater diversity of voices and perspectives. Assessment criteria that score a candidate's future potential rather than their past academic record, and that value non-academic career experience to the same degree as formal qualifications, are only the first step. Many academics would still rather rely on the informal signals conveyed by academic references and first-degree classifications.

Reinhardt (2019) sets out a range of recommendations for universities to address postgraduate access, including better collection of postgraduate data on race, disability and socio-economic status, agreeing key targets and indicators of success, and a pooling of successful strategies. Hancock and Williams (2019) ask who is ultimately responsible for institutional compliance and reporting in this area, and suggest that the research funders should show more leadership.

Diversity work in UK universities and the future of anthropology

This paper has sought to set out the challenges for both our discipline and our institutions in acknowledging existing privilege and in seeking to transform institutional cultures and to increase the ethnic, racial, gender and class diversity of our field. This is easier said than done. Academic communities are shaped by the institutions that employ staff and fund research. The principle of academic tenure and the low turnover of academic staff makes change a slow and gradual process. Activist academics are entangled with the structures they seek to reform.

Perhaps the first step is to acknowledge the histories of educational and social privilege that universities inherit and embody. Based in Oxford, I welcome the tough media and political scrutiny that my institution receives. I am also acutely aware of my own racial privilege, and the educational capital I gained from my own Oxford undergraduate education. Decolonising a university that sustains an educational elite defined by class, race, and eight centuries of accumulated wealth is no small challenge.

US anthropologists have a long century of disciplinary activism challenging racial discrimination from which to learn (Baker 1998), of which the most recent example is an American Anthropological Association commission on racism in the US academy (Harrison 2012). The comparative reticence of UK universities (and, until recently, anthropology) to address the ongoing legacies of colonial injustice has led to growing calls for curriculum decolonization (Bhambra et al 2018) and student-led activism across the UK, vividly documented in *Rhodes must Fall* (Chantiluke et al 2018). Few British social anthropologists have publicly commented on the legacies of colonialism and scholarly orientalism (Said 1978) for the contemporary discipline (but see Man Singh Gell 1996). Some argue that the discipline can never fully decolonise, and will have to live with its postcolonial complicities (Pels 2018). Yet things are beginning to change, especially as a result of the Black Lives Matter, and even the lobby group of UK universities now acknowledges that institutional racism is a real problem, setting out a range of strategies for changing institutional cultures (Universities UK 2020)

For those pursuing an activist anthropology of anthropology, critical feminist and anti-racist scholarship becomes a valuable resource. Ahmed's *Living a feminist life'* (2017) offers a pithy and politically astute theoretical analysis of universities' resistance to change. Her own frustration with the normativity of sexual harassment within her university, and its unwillingness to act, led to her resignation. This is the raw backdrop to the challenge facing 'diversity-workers' within the academy. As she puts it 'it is through the effort to transform institutions that we generate knowledge about them' (ibid, 93). She insists on acknowledging our own entanglement within the system we are trying to change: 'When we have to think strategically, we also have to accept our complicity: we forgo any illusions of purity; we give up the safety of exteriority. If we are not exterior to the problem under investigation, we too are the problem under investigation (ibid, 94)'. Ahmed challenges us to think about how to work with our own complicity. Are we for or against change? Admissions and student support are integral to the universities we want to make. Diversity policies are not someone else's problem.

What does this all mean in practice? We are all responsible for transforming our universities (and our disciplinary fields) into the inclusive and welcoming communities we want them to become. Postgraduate summer schools, undergraduate foundation years, tailored outreach programmes with schools and individualised career mentoring need to be an integral aspect of academic practice. Universities will soon be doing much more equality reporting, tracking and positive action. The conversation has only just begun.

Conclusion: Transforming University Education

In November 2020, Universities UK published its Fair Admissions Review, reiterating a broad set of principles about making admission fairer. Its bland principles now need to be acted upon. Like sociology, anthropology has the potential to offer students 'powerful knowledges' (Maclean, Abbas and Ashwin 2017) that are personally transformative, and that can question existing conceptions of university education (Ashwin 2020). Anthropology can ask difficult questions about the institutional worlds that sustain the discipline's skewed demographic profile and a sometimes alienating set of pedagogies. In the UK, anthropology has a privileged place within elite universities, sustained by low-paid contingent academic labour and growing student debt. Undergraduate 'success' is not distributed equally and nor are postgraduate funding opportunities (Williams et al 2019). This makes the tracking of doctoral access, experience and outcomes (Hancock and Wakeling 2019) as important as debates about widening access at undergraduate level.

Change requires wilful, determined 'diversity work' (Ahmed 2017). To decolonize and remake our field requires determined collective action, and an honest discussion about institutional racism and discrimination. Rigorous equality audits (focusing on all the protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act) depend on detailed student data, along with an attention to the academic career outcomes (Hancock et al 2019). This can then lead to ambitious university action plans (Universities UK 2020). Our discipline can play its part by thinking holistically about the many contexts that shape our learners' journeys, and begin to imagine other ways of structuring our universities.

Notes

[i] The 'Russell Group' is a mission group of 24 universities with highly selective admissions policies, expecting applicants to get the top A level grades. They and others in the 'Sutton 30' are often referred to as 'high-tariff' universities. A full list can be found here.
[ii] In May 2020 these numbers caps were reintroduced in the context of the uncertainty generated by Covid19 over university finances, albeit with a generous 5% leeway, allowing the most over-subscribed universities to over-recruit.

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