Results

Secondary Education

The initial dataset used was National 16-18 destination measures provided by Gov.UK. This had too many options to provide a meaningful insight, and recent reforms to technical and applied qualifications mean that the makeup of level 3 and level 2 approved qualification groups differ significantly between destination years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Comparisons across years and approved/other qualification groups should therefore not be made, so this wasn’t much use.

We instead went on to use a smaller set of headline data, comparing a smaller number of destination options by gender. We looked at 2019/20 to see what the most recent trend is, and compared to the earlier 2017/18 set to see if there was any difference.

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2019/20 shows a similar trend for both female and male students. The majority of students move into sustained education, apprenticeship or employment, with sustained education being the most popular option.

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Conclusion

1. What outcomes are being achieved by females at secondary and higher education levels and how does this differ from outcomes for males?

At a secondary level, the data for 2017/18 is almost identical to 2019/20, indicating that this pattern is a steady constant.

In 2019/20, the number of female students completing 16-18 education was 258,569, compared to a similar figure of 262,548 males. This is likely because education is compulsory at this stage. 83.80% of female students went on to sustained education, apprenticeships or employment, compared to a similar 78.70% of males.

At this stage in the education journey, gender appears to have zero impact on the destination.

Next Steps and Lessons Learnt

Having an undefined project is very difficult for neurodiverse students, who prefer to work with a structure. It would have been preferable to have a choice of defined projects and instructions to work from. This is also more reflective of a real life situation, where you would be given a brief to work from.

Due to educational reforms in 2017, it was not possible to compare secondary data before and after this date. As we were looking to see how trends followed through into higher education, it made sense to focus on the later information available. This meant that our range was limited from 2017/18 to 2020/21, so it wasn’t really possible to see any trends over a long period of time.