

## **What happens to students entering HE with access qualifications?**

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### **Introduction**

Every year, HEFCE publishes performance indicators (PI) for higher education institutions (HEI) which include information about the progression of students at individual HEIs, and their employment outcomes. These figures are based on the information submitted to HESA by institutions.

The sector figures can also be broken down by entry qualification and subject of study, with certain caveats. The HESA student record provides the 'highest qualification on entry' of each student, one of the categories being 'Access course'. At present this does not distinguish between validated courses and others, so the figures given here cannot make this distinction.

The following tables give values for mature students, i.e. those who were over 21 when they entered higher education. As the main interest here is in students from access courses, this provides a better basis for comparison.

### **Non-continuation rates**

This PI looks at the proportion of students who enter HE in a particular year who are no longer studying in HE the following year, and have not obtained a qualification. Table A shows the results for mature students only, and compares the non-continuation rates for those entering with access qualifications and those entering with other qualifications. It shows the figures for the last two years, i.e. for those entering in 1998-99 and for those entering in 1999-2000.

Table B shows equivalent figures by subject of study, for subjects where there are at least 400 access entrants.

The non-continuation rates for young students, and other groups of mature students, can be found in the HEFCE publication 2002/52, table B9 and B10 in Annex B. The institutional rates are shown in Table T3 of that document.

### **Employment rates**

Shortly after graduation, students are asked to complete a First Destination survey. This looks at their employment status six months after graduating. The possible outcomes are: in employment, seeking employment, undertaking further study or training, and other outcome (e.g. travelling, caring for a dependent, etc.). Tables C and D show the unemployment rate defined as the proportion of those employed, seeking employment, or studying who are seeking employment – i.e. omitting those with other outcomes. Table C shows the rates by entry qualifications, and table D shows them by the same subjects of study as used in table B. Again these tables only show results for mature students, to show

how access entrants fare in the job market. Note that no account is taken of the type of job being done.

**Table A: Non-continuation rates by entry qualifications**

Entry qualifications	1998-99 mature entrants		1999-2000 mature entrants	
	Number of entrants	Non-continuation rates	Number of entrants	Non-continuation rates
Access	9,270	16.4	8,530	15.8
Foundation course	3,670	13.5	2,170	13.3
A-levels <12	1,970	12.7	5,770	13.2
A-levels 12-22	3,990	12.9	3,490	14.6
A-levels over 22	1,970	8.1	1,340	9.7
BTEC	3,290	16.9	2,870	17.3
Degree	2,740	12.5	3,050	10.9
Other HE	12,970	14.5	12,140	15.3
Unknown	6,370	19.7	7,850	19.2
All entry quals	64,830	16.0	60,390	15.9

**Table B: Non-continuation rates by selected subject of study**

	1998-99 mature entrants				1999-2000 mature entrants			
	All entrants		Access entrants		All entrants		Access entrants	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Subjects Allied to Medicine	6,500	11.7	850	13.0	6,490	11.6	1,000	12.8
Biological Sciences	3,380	15.5	710	16.5	3,080	15.9	620	18.8
Computer Science	4,610	20.0	550	23.6	4,750	19.6	580	22.0
Social, economic & political studies	6,320	17.0	1,480	15.8	6,080	15.0	1,420	13.7
Languages	2,310	13.9	470	13.4	2,150	16.6	410	17.5
Humanities	1,960	14.0	470	14.6	1,810	16.4	430	14.7
Creative Arts	6,540	13.7	540	15.3	6,310	13.1	460	10.9
Education	3,700	11.8	910	10.7	4,010	12.1	960	12.5
Combined	7,890	18.0	1,720	17.5	6,310	19.3	1,300	17.3
All subjects	64,830	16.0	9,270	16.4	60,390	15.9	8,530	15.8

**Table C: Unemployment rates by entry qualifications**

Entry qualifications	Number of eligible graduates	Unemployment rates
Access	4,070	10.7
Foundation course	1,230	12.1
A-levels <12	4,180	8.0
A-levels 12-22	2,740	7.1
A-levels over 22	1,720	4.7
BTEC	1,510	11.5
Degree	1,650	3.7
Other HE	6,540	10.0
Unknown	2,800	8.6
All	33,000	8.8

**Table D: Unemployment rates by selected subject of study**

	All graduates who entered HE as mature students		Graduates with access entry qualifications	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Subjects Allied to				
Medicine	3,770	2.2	430	4.2
Biological Sciences	1,850	9.9	340	12.2
Computer Science	2,000	16.9	180	18.2
Social, economic & political studies	2,960	8.2	710	10.6
Languages	1,440	9.4	250	10.5
Humanities	1,140	8.9	260	10.9
Creative Arts	3,430	13.4	250	17.5
Education	2,780	2.4	560	3.1
Combined	2,510	11.5	510	14.5
All subjects	33,000	8.8	4,070	10.7