

Students Entering Higher Education Institutions with Access Qualifications 2002/03

By Andy Youell, HESA



Introduction

The following analyses are taken from the HESA Student Record for the academic year ending 31 July 2003. These analyses include registrations on undergraduate HE programmes at HE institutions in England and Wales. Figures for both full-time and part-time programmes are shown.

The HESA Student Record for 2002/03 collects 'Highest qualification on entry' for every student. The highest qualification on entry is not necessarily the qualification *for* entry to that specific programme of study, though this distinction is not felt to be statistically significant in the following analyses.

The HESA data for 2002/03 does, for the first time, distinguish between Access courses validated via the QAA Access Recognition scheme and other "access" courses. This distinction has not been possible in previous reports and direct comparisons with data for previous years is not possible. Where the term "Access qualification" is used in the following analysis, it refers only to Access qualifications validated via the QAA Access Recognition scheme.

In line with the Agency's rounding strategy, all numbers shown in this paper are rounded to the nearest five.

JACS Subject Coding

2002/03 has seen the introduction of the JACS subject coding system in the HE sector. The analysis of JACS subject information by HESA is undertaken using an apportionment algorithm that splits student numbers between the component subjects associated with a qualification aim. Analyses for earlier years involved counting each student against a single subject area which resulted in a substantial proportion of students being allocated to the "combined" subject.

The apportionment algorithm is as follows: a balanced two subject programme is treated as comprising two components of one half weight; a major/minor two subject programme is treated as comprising a two thirds weight major component and a one third weight minor component; and a three subject programme is treated as comprising three components of one third weight. PGCE students and primary ITT students with no subject specialism are apportioned entirely to 'Education'. Other ITT students will always be apportioned with one half weight to 'Education', and the remaining one half to the subject specialism(s) reported in the qualification aim fields, on the same basis as for non-ITT programmes

Access Entrants to Higher Education

In the year 2002/03 there were 11295 students on undergraduate programmes who had entered with an Access qualification. Table 1 breaks these down by mode and level of qualification.

Table 1: Entrants to Undergraduate HE Programmes with Access Entry Qualifications 2002/03

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
First Degree	7540	515	8055
Other UG	2620	620	3245
Total	10160	1135	11295

Undergraduate entrants with Access qualifications represent a relatively small proportion of all undergraduate entrants; Table 2 shows the proportion in each of the categories in Table 1.

Table 2: Proportion of Entrants to HE Programmes with Access Entry Qualifications 2002/03

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
First Degree	2.5%	1.8%	2.4%
Other UG	5.4%	0.3%	1.3%
Total	2.9%	0.5%	2.0%

Excludes unknown qualification on entry

The full-time other undergraduate area has the most significant proportion of entrants with an Access qualification. Analysis of this category by subject (Table 3) reveals that 83% of these students with an Access qualification are studying in the area of "Subjects allied to medicine".

Table 3: Full-time Other Undergraduate Entrants by Subject Area and Entry Qualification 2002/03

	Access (QAA recognised)	Access (other)	Other	Unknown	Total
Medicine & dentistry	0	0	90	20	110
Subjects allied to medicine	2175	500	16765	2360	21800
Biological sciences	15	10	1060	105	1185
Veterinary science	0	0	40	0	40
Agriculture & related subjects	5	5	1065	50	1125
Physical sciences	5	0	420	40	465
Mathematical sciences	0	0	310	5	315
Computer science	90	35	4335	355	4815
Engineering & technology	25	10	2355	255	2645
Architecture, building & planning	5	0	670	75	750
Social studies	155	55	1875	495	2580
Law	0	0	585	25	615
Business & administrative studies	60	15	6115	780	6970
Mass communications & documentation	0	5	635	5000	690
Languages	5	0	2595	1365	3965
Historical & philosophical studies	0	0	180	30	205
Creative arts & design	50	50	3520	445	4060
Education	10	5	1350	135	1500
Combined	5	0	1100	265	1370
Total	2620	685	45055	6855	55220

** Excludes unknown qualification on entry*

Table 4 summarises the subjects studied by all Access entrants.

Table 4: Entrants with Access Qualification by Mode, Level and Subject Area 2002/03

Level Mode	First Degree		Other UG		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Medicine & dentistry	35	0	0	0	40
Subjects allied to medicine	1460	90	2175	95	3815
Biological sciences	775	60	15	5	860
Veterinary science	5	0	0	0	5
Agriculture & related subjects	20	0	5	5	35
Physical sciences	185	5	5	0	195
Mathematical sciences	45	0	0	0	50
Computer science	535	25	90	45	700
Engineering & technology	190	5	25	10	230
Architecture, building & planning	35	5	5	10	55
Social studies	1075	65	155	100	1395
Law	330	45	0	5	380
Business & administrative studies	480	25	60	40	605
Mass communications & documentation	130	5	0	0	135
Languages	560	30	5	55	650
Historical & philosophical studies	410	30	0	50	495
Creative arts & design	420	70	50	10	550
Education	740	25	10	105	880
Combined	110	20	5	90	225
Total	7540	515	2620	620	11295

Access entrants to undergraduate programmes during 2002/03 were concentrated in the post-1992 universities with The University of Salford being the only pre-1992 university to recruit more than 250 Access entrants that year. Table 5 shows the institutions that recruited the largest number of students with an Access qualification.

Table 5: Access entrants by Mode and Institution 2002/03
(Number of entrants and percentage of entrants with known qualification on entry)

	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
The University of Salford	340	7.2%	30	2.0%	370	6.0%
University of Central England in Birmingham	335	7.2%	20	0.5%	355	4.1%
The University of Wolverhampton	290	5.6%	30	1.2%	320	4.1%
The Manchester Metropolitan University	295	3.7%	25	1.4%	315	3.3%
Sheffield Hallam University	275	4.5%	35	1.7%	315	3.8%
Anglia Polytechnic University	235	5.5%	50	0.8%	285	2.7%
The University of Greenwich	265	5.7%	15	0.7%	280	4.1%
University of the West of England, Bristol	255	4.8%	25	1.3%	280	3.9%
University of Hertfordshire	215	3.9%	20	1.0%	235	3.2%
The University of Westminster	190	4.2%	35	1.1%	225	2.9%

Access Entrants – Student Characteristics

Table 6 shows the gender split for entrants to undergraduate programmes in 2002/03.

Table 6: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Level, Entry Qualification and Gender 2002/03

Level	First-degree		Other UG		Total
	Access	Other	Access	Other	
Female	5625	171255	2695	158120	337690
Male	2430	149680	545	83925	236580
Total	8055	320935	3245	242040	574275

Excludes unknown qualification on entry

The table shows that, across both full-time and part-time modes, there are more females than males entering undergraduate programmes in 2002/03. Access entrants show a higher proportion of females than other entry qualifications at both first-degree and Other UG levels. The proportions at the Other UG level are skewed heavily by the relative dominance of nursing in the Access category.

Table 7: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Entry Qualification, Mode and Age 2002/03

Entry Qualification	Access		Other		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Under 18	10		3525	2375	5910
18 to 20	355	15	246785	11435	258590
21 to 24	2215	125	47590	28720	78650
25 to 29	2100	210	16120	33950	52380
30 and over	5475	785	25050	144250	175560
Unknown	5	5	195	2980	3185
Total	10160	1135	339265	223715	574275

Excludes unknown qualification on entry

Table 7 analyses the age of entrants to undergraduate programmes. Access entrants to full-time programmes are most prominent in the 30 and over category, with roughly equal numbers in the early and late twenties. Access entrants to part-time programmes are skewed further towards the 30 and over category, at the expense of the under 25 categories. Table 1 showed that the part-time access entrant numbers are relatively low.

By comparison, the other entry qualifications show a more 'traditional' profile of ages. Three quarters of entrants to full-time undergraduate programmes are under 21 and almost two thirds of the entrants to part-time programmes are 30 and over (the latter category being skewed by 'continuing education' registrations).

Table 8 shows that the entrants with access qualifications have a higher representation from ethnic minority groups than entrants with other qualifications, though there are interesting differences between the various ethnic categories. Ethnicity data in the HESA student record is only collected for UK domiciled students.

Table 8: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Level, Entry Qualification and Ethnicity 2002/03

Level	First-degree		Other UG		Total
	Access	Other	Access	Other	
White	5740	221800	1980	180605	410125
Black Caribbean	340	3955	195	3615	8110
Black African	470	7525	535	6290	14820
Black other	80	1260	50	1440	2830
Indian	125	14035	35	4525	18720
Pakistani	130	7720	30	2640	10520
Bangladeshi	55	2410	10	740	3215
Chinese	45	3215	10	1310	4580
Asian other	110	3805	35	3010	6960
Other	265	8135	80	4540	13015
Not known	445	11265	140	19115	30970
Total	7800	285125	3100	227835	523860

*Excludes unknown qualification on entry
Data only covers UK domiciled students*

Care should be taken when analysing ethnic groupings due to the relatively high proportion of 'not known' values. The 'not known' category includes cases where the student has refused to supply the information.

Table 9 below shows disability for undergraduate entrants in 2002/03. Although the figures within each of the disability categories are low the relatively high proportion of access entrants with dyslexia is worthy of note.

Table 9: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Level, Entry Qualification and Disability 2002/03

Level	First-degree		Other UG		Total
	Access	Other	Access	Other	
No known disability	6885	266420	2855	214170	490325
Dyslexia	385	8710	95	2935	12125
Blind/Partially sighted	20	425	5	360	810
Deaf/Hearing impairment	30	750	10	795	1585
Wheelchair user/Mobility difficulties	50	550	10	680	1290
Personal care support		35	0	30	65
Mental health difficulties	60	575	15	735	1385
An unseen disability (*)	155	3400	45	1940	5545
Multiple disabilities	75	680	10	1445	2210
A disability not listed above	115	2190	25	1545	3875
Not known	30	1390	30	3200	4645
Total	7800	285125	3100	227835	523860

*Excludes unknown qualification on entry
Data only covers UK domiciled students*

(* = e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma)

Access Students - Qualifications Awarded

Note: Since this section covers students who began their HE programme before 2002/03, it includes all types of "Access" entry qualification.

In 2002/03, qualifications were awarded to undergraduate students for whom an Access qualification was their highest qualification on entry. A breakdown of these awards is shown below.

Table 10: Qualifications Awarded in 2002/03 to students who entered HE with an Access Qualification

	First-degree	Other UG	Total
Medicine & dentistry	0	0	0
Subjects allied to medicine	915	1295	2210
Biological sciences	535	50	585
Agriculture & related subjects	20	5	30
Physical sciences	125	15	140
Mathematical sciences	45	5	50
Computer science	440	125	565
Engineering & technology	125	30	155
Architecture, building & planning	40	10	50
Social studies	880	265	1145
Law	255	45	300
Business & administrative studies	380	100	480
Mass communications and documentation	130	20	150
Languages	460	20	475
Historical and philosophical studies	425	20	445
Creative arts & design	470	65	535
Education	485	50	535
Combined	65	25	90
Total	5800	2140	7940

Table 11 shows the proportion of first-degrees awarded by classification and qualification on entry. It shows that proportionately fewer first and upper-second class degrees are awarded to students who enter with an access qualification.

Table 11: Classification of First-degree by Entry Qualification 2002/03

	Access	Other	Total
First class	480	24195	24675
Upper second class	2435	104015	106450
Lower second class	2140	73920	76060
Third class / Pass	545	16455	17000
Unclassified	200	10450	10650
Total	5800	229035	234835

Excludes unknown qualification on entry