

Students Entering Higher Education Institutions with Access Qualifications – Non-continuation and Employment rates

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Introduction

In 2004 HESA took over the calculation and publication of the performance indicators (PI) for higher education institutions (HEI). These PIs – published in previous years by HEFCE - include information about the progression of students at individual HEIs and their employment outcomes. The full PI publication can be found at www.hesa.ac.uk/pi.

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'. Although there is a distinction between 'QAA recognised' and 'other' Access courses in the HESA student record from 2002/03, the latest PIs consider the progression and subsequent employment of students who entered before this date and therefore do not make this distinction.

The following tables give values for mature students, ie those who were over 21 when they entered higher education. As the main interest here is in students from Access courses, who are predominantly mature, this provides the most appropriate basis for comparison.

Non-continuation rates

The non-continuation rate is the proportion of students who enter a full-time first-degree programme 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 all mature entrants on full-time first-degree programmes and compares the non-continuation rates for those entering with access qualifications and those entering with other qualifications.

Table A – Non-continuation Rates of 2001-02 Mature Entrants by Entry Qualification

Entry qualifications	Number of entrants	Non-continuation rates (%)
Access	8,690	14.5
Foundation course	1,970	11.9
A-levels, up to 11 points	6,670	13.4
A-levels, 12 to 22 points	6,395	12.5
A-levels, 23 to 30 points	2,280	9.3
BTEC	3,050	15.7
First degree	3,470	9.7
Other previous HE	15,225	14.6
Other including unknown	17,825	18.6
All entry qualifications	65,575	14.9

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

Table B – Non-continuation Rates of 2001-02 Mature Entrants by Subject of Study

Subject of study	All entrants		Access entrants	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
Subjects allied to medicine	8,560	11.2	1,590	11.7
Biological sciences and physical sciences	4,730	18.0	770	18.5
Mathematical sciences and computer sciences	6,135	18.4	680	18.9
Social studies and law	8,675	14.8	1,725	14.2
Business and administrative studies and mass communications and documentation	8,570	16.8	490	17.5
Languages and humanities	4,585	14.8	920	14.4
Creative arts and design	6,865	13.0	395	14.4
Education	4,370	10.2	945	10.2
Combined	5,480	18.2	865	14.7
All subjects of study	65,575	14.9	8,690	14.5

Employment rates

Six months after graduation from a full-time first-degree programme students are asked to complete a Destinations of Leavers from HE (DLHE) survey. This gathers information about employment, whether undertaking further study or training and other outcomes after graduation. The following tables show employment rates for those who entered their programme as mature students and who graduated in 2002/03. Table C breaks the numbers down by entry qualification and Table D focuses on subject of study.

Table C – Employment rates of Mature Students by Entry Qualification
(Graduates in 2002/03)

Entry qualifications	Number of respondents	Employment rates (%)
Access	3,725	89.8
Foundation course	1,055	86.3
A-levels, up to 11 points or 200 tariff score	2,735	90.9
A-levels, 12 to 22 points, over 200 to 260 tariff score	2,620	91.6
A-levels, 23 to 30 points, over 260 tariff score	945	94.0
BTEC	1,860	87.0
First degree	1,600	95.4
Other previous HE	8,065	90.1
Other including unknown	5,770	89.2
All entry qualifications	28,380	90.2

Table D – Employment rates of Mature Students by Subject of Study
(Graduates in 2002/03)

Subject of study	All graduates who entered HE as mature students		Graduates with access entry qualifications	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
Nursing, ophthalmics, medical technology	2,555	99.2	375	97.9
Other subjects allied to medicine	1,765	95.0	330	95.4
Biological science	1,900	89.3	365	87.5
Computer science	2,305	83.4	245	83.7
Social work, geography	1,080	94.6	220	95.3
Other social studies, law	2,400	90.1	485	86.4
Languages, humanities	2,755	89.3	605	86.6
Education	1,780	95.6	395	95.2
Grand Total	28,380	90.2	3,725	89.8