

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education



Access to HE statistics summary (2003-04)

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Introduction

The data presented below summarises the statistics received in December 2004 from the 25 authorised validating agencies (AVAs), licensed by QAA to recognise Access programmes in England and Wales. It relates to Access programmes and students in the academic year 2003-04.

While data for all five years is presented here for information, comparisons between the five years' data should be made with caution, particularly where numbers involved suggest small increases or decreases: relatively minor changes - sometimes within a single AVA - can suggest a more significant change than is necessarily present. A number of new or revised categories were introduced in 2002-03, so reliable time series are not available in all areas.

Section A: Providers and Programmes

A1 Providers offering Access to HE programmes

	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000	
FE Colleges	334	81%	330	79%	334	79%	329	79%	348	78%
HE Institutions	17	4%	20	5%	17	4%	21	5%	26	6%
Sixth Form Colleges	14	3%	17	4%	22	5%	19	5%	23	5%
Adult/community education centres	22	5%	23	6%	24	6%	21	5%	25	5%
Schools	1	0%	3	1%	2	0%	11	3%	12	3%
Other	22	5%	23	6%	22	5%	16	4%	14	3%
Total	410		416		421		417		448	
AVA range: lowest number of providers in an AVA	4		4		6		4		4	
highest number of providers in an AVA	42		42		39		31		36	
Average number of providers in an AVA:										
mean	16		16		16		14		14	
median	15		15		16		14		12	

The decline in the number of providers has continued in 2003-04. The number of FE Colleges increased in 2003-04 to 334 reversing the decline in 2002-03. HE institutions acting as providers of Access programmes had a small decrease to 17 in (2003-04) returning to the same level as in 2001-02. The number of providers recorded in the category of 'other' has stayed constant for the last three years, as has the average number of providers in an AVA.

A1 Numbers of Access to HE programmes

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-2000
Programmes available	1,407	1,568	1,281	1,182	1,238
Programmes running	1,125	1,233	961	929	1,022
New programmes recognised	166	147	259	129	304
AVA range: lowest number of programmes running in an AVA	15	11	11	5	6
highest number of programmes running in an AVA	183	214	185	129	149
Average number of programmes running in an AVA:					
mean	45	47	36	31	33
median	31	29	24	22	26

There has been a small decrease in the number of programmes available and running between 2003-04 and 2002-03 but a small increase in new programmes recognised. The lowest number of programmes running in an AVA has continued to increase as a result of AVA mergers.

Although the number of programmes running in 2003-04 in individual AVAs ranges from 15 to 183, almost two-thirds of AVAs (15) recorded fewer than 50 programmes running.

A1 Number of providers offering programmes, programmes running and total learners registered by AVA (2003-04)

		Providers	Programmes running	Total learners registered	Learners registered: expected end date before 1 August 2004	Certificates awarded
AVA01	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance	10	16	1,558	1,063	726
AVA03	Cambridge Access Validating Agency	10	47	1,531	1,345	697
AVA06	Greater Manchester Open College Network	20	61	2,519	2,061	1,346
AVA07	Hampshire Authorised Validating Agency	13	15	707	497	351
AVA09	London Open College Network	35	101	4,921	4,921	2,910
AVA10	Merseyside Open College Network	15	17	1,729	1,528	915
AVA11	Open College Network North and East London and Hertfordshire	18	79	3,193	2,973	1,314
AVA12	Anglia South Open College Network	13	21	665	621	295
AVA13	North East Midlands Open College Network	11	54	1,365	1,144	462
AVA14	North Wales Open College Network (includes South East Wales OCN)	22	71	2,086	1,600	901
AVA15	Open College Network South Yorkshire and Humber Region	17	33	3,741	2,664	718
AVA16	Open College Network for Central England	19	23	1,931	1,098	751
AVA17	Open College Network for the South East Midlands	15	28	1,030	940	483
AVA18	Open College Network for Kent and Medway	11	16	1,031	819	463
AVA19	Open College Network North West Midlands	10	16	1,089	809	453
AVA20	Open College Network of the South West	21	31	1,525	1,481	966
AVA21	Open College Network of West Midlands	18	79	3,042	2,114	828
AVA22	Western Region Open College Network	11	15	934	830	411
AVA23	Open College of the North West	42	183	5,125	4,804	942
AVA24	Oxfordshire Open College Network	4	16	339	339	213
AVA26	South of England Open College Network	12	55	1,243	1,143	701
AVA28	Thames Region Accrediting Consortium Open College Network	23	61	2,086	2,009	1,243
AVA29	OCN TROCN	22	51	1,624	1,535	963
AVA33	West and North Yorkshire Open College Network	14	19	595	595	359
AVA34	Chiltern Region Open College Network and Access Consortium	4	17	268	268	194

A2 Awards available (by designated progression route)

	Programmes available		Programmes running		% programmes running of programmes available
	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Other general and combined studies	278	276	228	237	82%
Social studies	133	173	108	163	81%
Creative arts and design	137	140	106	108	77%
Subjects allied to medicine	191	209	169	200	88%
Business and administrative studies	92	110	61	69	66%
Mathematical and computer sciences	86	101	67	90	78%
Education	103	141	83	90	81%
Combined sciences	68	66	54	58	79%
Combined social sciences	39	49	34	41	87%
Science combined/social studies/arts	59	47	51	43	86%

The data lists the 10 subject areas which have 40 or more programmes available and running. The subject category with the highest number of programmes available and running in both years was 'Other general and combined studies'. The number of programmes running decreased between 2003-04 and 2002-03 across the majority of subject areas.

Section B: Learner profile

B1 Total number of learner registrations on Access programmes

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-2000
Total learner registrations	45,877	40,218	40,484	38,684	37,729
Total number of new learners registered	40,972	33,867	34,640	33,373	32,762
AVA range: lowest number of learner registrations in an AVA	268	298	203	261	316
highest number of learner registrations in an AVA	5,125	4,596	5,679	5,086	5,891
Average number of learner registrations in an AVA:					
mean	1,835	1,547	1,499	1,289	1,217
median	1,531	1,357	1,151	986	745

There has been an increase between 2003-04 and 2002-03 in total numbers of Access registrations, with a corresponding increase in the average number of learner registrations in an AVA. An increase in learner registrations was recorded by 13 of the 25 AVAs. The range of learner registrations in an AVA has widened between 2003-04 and 2002-03, with a reduction in the lowest number of learner registrations in an AVA and a corresponding increase in the highest number of learner registrations in an AVA during 2003-04. The variation in size of AVA (indicated under A1) is reflected in the numbers of learners registered by AVA: six AVAs record fewer than 1,000 learners; 11 record between 1,001 and 2,000; six record between 2,001 and 4,000; and two record over 4,000.

Registrations by end date

	Learning aim at registration:	Access to HE Totals	Other Totals	Total	% of total learners
2003-04					
New learners registered: expected end date before 1 August 2004		32,744	2,160	34,904	76%
New learners registered: expected end date on or after 1 August 2004		5,721	347	6,068	13%
Re-registered (same programme): expected end date before 1 August 2004		4,035	262	4,297	9%
Re-registered (same programme): expected end date after 1 August 2004		591	17	608	1%

	Learning aim at registration:	Access to HE Totals	Other Totals	Total	% of total learners
2002-03					
New learners registered:expected end date before 1 August 2003		27,848	2,011	29,859	74%
New learners registered:expected end date on or after 1 August 2003		6,019	511	6,530	16%
Re-registered (same programme):expected end date before 1 August 2003		3,145	38	3,183	8%
Re-registered (same programme):expected end date after 1 August 2003		160	24	184	1%
Not known/not provided		462		462	1%

The number of learners registering in 2003-04 increased from the 2002-03 levels across all categories except for the category recording new learners who registered intending to complete after 1 August in 2003-04, which recorded a small decrease between 2002-03 and 2003-04.

B2 Learner profile at registration: age/sex/ethnicity

	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-00	
	registrations	% of total	registrations	% of total	registrations	% of total	registrations	% of total	registrations	% of total
Male learners	11,912	26%	10,939	27%	10,448	26%	10,500	27%	10344	28%
Female learners	33,965	74%	29,279	73%	29,784	74%	27,802	73%	26492	71%

The number of male learners registered on programmes decreased slightly and females increased in 2003-04 from the previous year.

Learner Profile at Registration: age

	All Learners		Male Learners		Female Learners	
	No of registrations	% of total	No of registrations	% of total male learners	No of registrations	% of total female learners
2003-04						
Under 20	2,399	5%	900	8%	1,499	4%
20 - 29	20,776	45%	5,903	50%	14,873	44%
30 - 39	14,497	32%	2,951	25%	11,546	34%
40 - 49	5,352	12%	1,211	10%	4,141	12%
50 - 59	987	2%	341	3%	646	2%
Over 60	302	1%	118	1%	184	1%
Unknown	1,564	3%	488	4%	1,076	3%
Total	45,877		11,912		33,965	
2002-03						
Under 20	508	1%	216	2%	292	1%
20 - 29	16,733	42%	5,340	49%	11,393	39%
30 - 39	13,446	33%	2,918	26%	10,528	36%
40 - 49	5,003	13%	1,177	11%	3,826	13%
50 - 59	1,076	3%	360	3%	716	2%
Over 60	483	1%	203	2%	280	1%
Unknown	2,969	7%	725	7%	2,244	8%
Total	40,218		10,939		29,279	

The number of learners who were under 20 years of age at registration increased in 2003-04. This increase is likely to have resulted from a change in the regulations allowing students who are 19/20 years of age to register on an Access course. The data collected for 2002-03 and 2003-04 shows that the largest proportion of learners fall in the age category of 20-29, and this applies for both male and female learners. However, there continues to be a higher proportion of male learners in the age category of 20-29 than female learners, with females having a higher proportion in the age category 30-39 than males. There was a decrease in the proportion of 'unknowns' recorded, from 7% in 2002-03 to 3% in 2003-04.

Learner profile at registration: ethnicity (2003-04)

	Male learners	Female learners	Totals	% total learners	2002-03 totals	% of total learners
Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi	149	118	267	1%	199	0%
Asian or Asian British-Indian	230	401	631	1%	503	1%
Asian or Asian British-Pakistani	296	410	706	2%	601	1%
background	303	452	755	2%	502	1%
Black or Black British-African	1,162	2,569	3731	8%	2,781	7%
Black or Black British-Caribbean	346	1,383	1729	4%	1,453	4%
background	161	464	625	1%	541	1%
Chinese	150	214	364	1%	347	1%
Mixed-White and Asian	40	100	140	0%	119	0%
Mixed-White and Black_African	70	177	247	1%	171	0%
Mixed_White and Black_Caribbean	51	255	306	1%	188	0%
Mixed-any other mixed background	85	205	290	1%	137	0%
White-British	6,757	22,221	28978	63%	25,409	63%
White-Irish	83	155	238	1%	193	0%
White-any other white background	376	866	1242	3%	1,186	3%
any other	441	702	1143	2%	792	2%
not known/not provided	1,212	3,273	4485	10%	5,096	13%
Total	11,912	33,965				

The proportion of learners across the ethnicity categories in 2003-04 remains similar to previous years. The number of unknowns in 2003-04 has dropped from the previous year both in percentage and in total number terms. The number of 'unknowns' is now at its lowest since 1999-2000 when they accounted for 9% of the total learners registered. There continued to be variations between AVAs. However, the majority of AVAs recorded less than 10% unknowns: 13 recorded no 'unknowns'; 10 recorded less than 10%; 1 recorded between 11% and 20%, and the remaining one recorded 28% unknown.

**Ethnicity summary
2003-04**

	Sum of under 29	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of 30-39	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of 40-49	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of 50 plus	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of Age Unknown	% of total in ethnicity category	Totals
White	14,655	48%	10,325	34%	3,907	13%	1,053	3%	518	2%	30,458
Black or Black British	3,347	55%	1,945	32%	691	11%	75	1%	27	0%	6,085
Asian or Asian British	1,717	73%	472	20%	129	5%	21	1%	20	1%	2,359
Chinese	310	85%	33	9%	16	4%	3	1%	2	1%	364
Mixed and any other	1,314	62%	556	26%	180	8%	54	3%	22	1%	2,126
Not known/not provided	1,832	41%	1,166	26%	429	10%	83	2%	975	22%	4,485

2002-03

	Sum of under 29	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of 30-39	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of 40-49	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of 50 plus	% of total in ethnicity category	Sum of Age Unknown	% of total in ethnicity category	Totals
White	10,825	40%	9,349	35%	3,472	13%	1,142	4%	2,000	7%	26,788
Black or Black British	2,307	48%	1,637	34%	589	12%	84	2%	158	3%	4,775
Asian or Asian British	1,148	64%	389	22%	102	6%	35	2%	131	7%	1,805
Chinese	285	82%	39	11%	12	3%	51	15%	8	2%	347
Mixed and any other	741	53%	427	30%	132	9%	30	2%	77	5%	1,407
Not known/not provided	1,935	38%	1,605	31%	696	14%	2,301	45%	595	12%	5,096

B3 Learner profile at registration: disadvantage

	total learners 2003-04	total learners 2002-03
From deprived area (ward based uplift)-postcode on LSc's file	14,767	8,264
From deprived area (ward based uplift)-postcode not on LSc's file	210	761
Other LSC widening participation category (funding claimed)	932	620
No funding claimed against widening participation categories/No information	29,968	30,573

The number of learners who live in a deprived area and have a postcode on the LSC file increased significantly between 2002-03 and 2003-04. This increase would appear to be a result of improved reporting by AVAs. However, there were a high number of learners recorded as 'unknown' in this section and the distinction between 'unknown' and 'no funding claimed' was not clear in all AVAs' returns. Five AVAs did not provide data regarding numbers of students for which widening participation funding had been claimed.

B4 Learner profile at registration: disability and learning difficulty

	2003-04	% of total	2002-03	% of total
Disability/ies	855	2%	727	2%
Learning difficulty/ies	1,084	2%	717	2%
Disability and learning difficulty/ies	531	1%	405	1%
No disability or learning difficulty	30,191	66%	18,297	45%
No information provided	13,216	29%	20,072	50%

The number of learners recorded in the category 'No information provided' has decreased between 2002-03 and 2003-04, from 50% of all learners in 2002-03 to 29% in 2003-04.

C1 Learner completion achievement

	2003-04					
	Access certificates awarded	Partial achievement	No achievement	Study continuing	Total	% of total
Continuing programme	14	1,718	111	3,738	5,581	12%
Completed programme	19,335	5,824	2,634	86	27,879	61%
Transferred from programme	0	42	406	2	450	1%
Withdrawn from programme	5	999	7,131	11	8,146	18%
Not known	251	1,583	1,987	0	3,821	8%
Total	19,605	10,166	12,269	3,837	45,877	

This is the first year that the categories 'Transferred from programme' and 'Withdrawn from programme' have been recorded as separate categories. The number of 'Not known' has increased between 2002-03 and 2003-04 from 3% of the total in 2002-03 to 8% in 2003-04.

C1 Award of Access certificates

	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01	1999-2000
Access of HE certificates awarded	19,605	18,393	17,085	16,404	17,194

The number of Access to HE certificates awarded has continued to increase in 2003-04. However, the increase in 2003-04 from the previous year was less than between 2001-02 to 2002-03. 50% of the number who were expected to complete their Access programme before 1 August 2004 were awarded an Access certificate within that year.

C1 Learner achievement: withdrawals	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01	
	Totals	% registered learners	Totals	% registered learners	Totals	% registered learners	Totals	% registered learners
Withdrawn with partial accreditation	999	2%	1,426	4%	1,258	3%	1,654	4%
Withdrawn with no accreditation	7,131	16%	6,779	17%	7,072	17%	4,906	13%

There has been a decrease in the number of learners withdrawing with partial accreditation between 2003-04 and 2002-03. The numbers of students not receiving accreditation in different AVAs ranged from 0 to 2,021.

C2 Learner registrations and awards by desingated progression route

	Total Learner registrations	Access to HE certificates awarded
Other general and combined studies	13,921	5,564
Science combined/social studies/arts	4,892	2,033
Access to nursing	3,868	1,661
Access to health studies	3,701	1,770
Creative arts and design	3,037	1,431
Social studies combined with arts	2,107	1,083
Combined sciences	1,882	441
Access to social work	1,415	433
Other social studies	1,354	607
Other subjects allied to medicine	1,234	588
Combined social sciences	1,218	646
Access to teaching	1,203	517
Business and administrative studies	1,147	465
Mathematical and computer sciences	1,071	499
	42,050	

The list above provides the subject areas with more than 1,000 students registered as learners together with the number of Access certificates awarded in those subject areas. Of the 32 subject areas for which data was collected, nine subjects had fewer than 100 learners registered, nine had between 100 and 1,000 learners registered and fourteen had more than 1,000 registered learners. 20 of the subject areas had between 40% and 60% of certificates awarded as a proportion of total learner registrations.

C3 Learner progression: intended destination	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02	2000-01	1999-2000
	Totals	with Access certificate*	Totals	with Access certificate*	Totals	Totals	Totals
Progressing to HE course	14,045	10,467	12,025	10,306	10,423	11,332	11,294
Progressing to FE course	1,010	357	1,381	461	2,624	2,644	2,471
Progressing to employment	1,248	507	1,820	556	1,129	1,324	1,482
Other	1,072	182	1,501	279	871	1,439	779
Unknown	23,819	8,026	18,785	6,648	12,446	10,529	9,603

The further increase in numbers whose intended destination is 'unknown' makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from changes in other categories. Of those learners progressing into higher education 75% had gained an Access certificate, a decrease from the previous year, when 86% of learners progressing into higher education gained an Access certificate. Four AVAs each recorded over 1,000 learners in this category, 5 recorded between 501 - 1,000, 13 recorded between 1 - 500, and 3 recorded no learners progressing to HE.