

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

By Suzie Dent, HESA

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 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 it is possible to distinguish between 'QAA recognised' and 'other' access courses in the HESA student record from 2002/03 onwards, the employment indicator includes some students who entered before this date and therefore it is not possible to make a complete distinction in this case.

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 QAA recognised 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 QAA recognised access qualifications and those entering with other qualifications.

Table A – Non-continuation rates of mature entrants by entry qualification 2004/05

Entry qualifications	Number of entrants	Non-continuation rates (%)
Access course (QAA recognised)*	5740	13.3
Other access courses and foundation courses	6445	13.5
A-levels / Scottish Highers with zero or unknown tariff score	6585	17.8
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with up to 160 tariff score or Baccalaureate	5425	11.5
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 160 and up to 200 tariff score	1600	13.7
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 200 and up to 230 tariff score	910	10.7
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 230 and up to 290 tariff score	2100	10.7
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 290 tariff score	3340	9.9
BTEC or VCE or GNVQ and no A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers	3745	14.7
Higher education qualification	22840	13.0
Other or unknown qualification	11695	20.0
All entry qualifications total	70430	14.4

* Includes any students coded as qualent2 = 48

Table B shows equivalent figures by subject of study, for subjects where there were at least 200 QAA recognised access entrants.

Table B – Non-continuation rates of mature entrants by subject of study 2004/05

Subject of study	All entrants		Access course (QAA recognised)* entrants	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
Subjects allied to medicine	12470	11.4	1505	11.8
Biological sciences	5380	16.2	580	16.7
Computer sciences	4925	18.9	250	20.7
Social studies	8030	13.7	960	11.1
Law	2320	16.7	250	17.4
Business & administrative studies	7675	17.4	315	14.6
Languages	2825	15.3	325	12.5
Historical & philosophical studies	2120	14.4	250	13.7
Creative arts & design	8420	12.8	275	14.1
Education	3780	11.0	545	9.5
All other subjects (grouped)	12485	15.0	485	15.3
All subjects total	70430	14.4	5740	13.3

* Includes any students coded as qualent2 = 48

Note: The category "all other subjects (grouped)" includes all subjects with less than 200 Access students.



Employment rates

Approximately 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, where applicable, about employment, 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 2005/06. Table C breaks the numbers down by entry qualification and Table D focuses on subject of study.

Table C – Employment rates (including further study) for those who entered HE as mature students by entry qualifications 2005/06

Entry qualifications	Number in base population	Employment rates (including further study) (%)
Access course (QAA recognised)*	2800	87.9
Other access courses and foundation courses	2085	88.8
A-levels / Scottish Highers with zero or unknown point score	3640	92.0
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with up to 8 points or 160 tariff score or Baccalaureate	2785	91.2
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 9 to 12 points or over 160 and up to 200 tariff score	820	90.5
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 13 to 18 points or over 200 and up to 230 tariff score	525	91.8
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 19 to 24 points or over 230 and up to 290 tariff score	1115	93.6
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 25 to 30 points or over 290 tariff score	1485	93.5
BTEC or VCE or GNVQ and no A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers	1560	88.7
Higher education qualification	10945	92.5
Other or unknown qualification	3995	90.7
All entry qualifications total	31755	91.3

* Includes any students coded as qualent2 = 48

Table D – Employment rates (including further study) for those who entered HE as mature students by subject of study 2005/06

Subject of study	All graduates who entered HE as mature students		Graduates with access course (QAA recognised)* entry qualifications	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
Subjects allied to medicine	6220	94.7	635	90.6
Biological sciences	2195	90.4	245	89.0
Social studies	2945	90.9	465	85.4
Languages	1485	90.5	230	89.7
Education	2450	95.4	395	95.4
All other subjects (grouped)	16455	89.7	825	82.9
All subjects total	31755	91.3	2800	87.9

* includes any students coded as qualent2 = 48

Note: The category "all other subjects (grouped)" includes all subjects with less than 200 Access students.

