

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 2005/06

Entry qualifications	Number of entrants	Non-continuation rates (%)
Access course (QAA recognised)*	7015	14.1
Other access courses and foundation courses	5905	13.7
A-levels / Scottish Highers with unknown tariff score	6390	17.4
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with up to 160 tariff score or Baccalaureate	5050	12.3
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 160 and up to 200 tariff score	1570	13.2
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 200 and up to 230 tariff score	960	9.8
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 230 and up to 290 tariff score	2410	12.0
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 290 tariff score	4110	9.8
BTEC or VCE or GNVQ and no A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers	4490	16.8
Higher education qualification	22565	12.5
Other or unknown qualification	11550	18.9
All entry qualifications total	72020	14.3

* 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 2005/06

Subject of study	All entrants		Access course (QAA recognised)* entrants	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
Subjects allied to medicine	12845	11.3	1955	11.7
Biological sciences	5615	16.2	740	16.8
Computer sciences	4375	19.3	245	19.9
Social studies	8200	13.1	1445	11.6
Law	2605	18.3	325	22.0
Business & administrative studies	7665	17.0	350	15.2
Languages	2775	14.8	315	14.7
Historical & philosophical studies	2070	14.4	260	14.7
Creative arts & design	8595	13.3	335	17.4
Education	3945	10.1	500	11.8
All other subjects (grouped)	13330	14.9	545	17.2
All subjects total	72020	14.3	7015	14.1

* 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 2006/07. 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 2006/07

Entry qualifications	Number in base population	Employment rates (including further study) (%)
Access course (QAA recognised)*	2585	91.0
Other access courses and foundation courses	2715	89.3
A-levels / Scottish Highers with unknown point score	3225	92.8
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with up to 8 points or 160 tariff score or Baccalaureate	2760	92.5
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 9 to 12 points or over 160 and up to 200 tariff score	805	93.4
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 13 to 18 points or over 200 and up to 230 tariff score	475	95.0
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 19 to 24 points or over 230 and up to 290 tariff score	1120	94.5
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with 25 to 30 points or over 290 tariff score	1900	94.2
BTEC or VCE or GNVQ and no A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers	1620	90.1
Higher education qualification	10825	93.3
Other or unknown qualification	4070	91.6
All entry qualifications total	32095	92.4

* 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 2006/07

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	6600	96.0	730	93.9
Biological sciences	2235	91.7	240	89.0
Social studies	3385	92.3	440	89.6
Education	2625	96.5	320	95.6
All other subjects (grouped)	17255	90.5	860	88.2
All subjects total	32095	92.4	2585	91.0

* includes any students coded as qualent2 = 48

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