

Students Entering Higher Education Institutions with Access Qualifications 2008/09

Lucy Heath
Information Analyst

Introduction

The following analyses are taken from the HESA Student Record for the academic year ending 31 July 2009. 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 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 2008/09 makes a clear distinction between QAA-recognised Access to HE certificates and other "access" certificates. In this paper the term Access refers specifically to QAA-recognised Access to HE certificates.

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

Access Entrants to Higher Education

In the year 2008/09 12,305 students entered an undergraduate programme with a QAA-recognised Access to HE certificate (2006/07: 12,080). Table 1 breaks these down by mode and level of qualification.

Table 1: Entrants to Undergraduate HE Programmes with Access Entry Qualifications 2008/09

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
First Degree	8570	485	9050
Other UG	2360	895	3250
Total	10925	1375	12305



Undergraduate entrants with Access qualifications represent 1.7% of all undergraduate entrants (2007/08: 1.8%). 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 2008/09

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
First Degree	2.3%	0.8%	2.1%
Other UG	3.9%	0.4%	1.1%
Total	2.5%	0.5%	1.7%

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 83.9% 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 2008/09

	Access	Other	Unknown	Total
Medicine & dentistry	10	195	10	215
Subjects allied to medicine	1980	16655	545	19180
Biological sciences	30	2525	110	2660
Veterinary science	0	0	0	0
Agriculture & related subjects	25	1630	55	1710
Physical sciences	15	800	120	940
Mathematical sciences	0	355	15	370
Computer science	40	2455	90	2585
Engineering & technology	25	3300	115	3440
Architecture, building & planning	10	1920	65	1995
Social studies	65	3360	670	4095
Law	5	1330	70	1400
Business & administrative studies	60	6120	415	6595
Mass communications and documentation	10	835	20	865
Languages	5	2180	185	2370
Historical and philosophical studies	0	310	30	340
Creative arts & design	55	6095	245	6395
Education	35	6730	515	7275
Combined	0	980	170	1155
Total	2360	57770	3460	63590



Table 4 summarises the subjects studied by all Access entrants.

Table 4: Undergraduate entrants with Access Qualification by Mode, Level and Subject Area 2008/09

	First Degree		Other UG		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Medicine & dentistry	10	0	10	0	15
Subjects allied to medicine	2130	115	1980	220	4445
Biological sciences	950	60	30	10	1050
Veterinary science	0	0	0	0	0
Agriculture & related subjects	25	0	25	5	55
Physical sciences	175	5	15	0	195
Mathematical sciences	35	5	0	0	40
Computer science	310	10	40	20	380
Engineering & technology	180	15	25	20	235
Architecture, building & planning	65	5	10	5	85
Social studies	1560	75	65	100	1805
Law	510	55	5	5	575
Business & administrative studies	735	35	60	60	885
Mass communications and documentation	195	0	10	10	215
Languages	385	30	5	50	465
Historical and philosophical studies	275	15	0	20	310
Creative arts & design	425	30	55	20	530
Education	570	40	35	255	895
Combined	35	0	0	85	120
Total	8570	485	2360	895	12305



Access entrants to undergraduate programmes during 2008/09 were concentrated in the post-1992 universities. Table 5 shows the institutions that recruited more than 200 students with an Access qualification.

Table 5: Access entrants to undergraduate programmes by Mode and Institution 2008/09
(Number of entrants and percentage of entrants with known qualification on entry)

	Full-time		Part-time		Total	% unknown qualification on entry	
Edge Hill University	365	12.3%	105	2.0%	470	5.7%	0.6%
The University of East London	340	5.7%	65	3.2%	410	5.1%	5.0%
Birmingham City University	360	5.8%	25	0.7%	385	3.8%	0.2%
The University of Teesside	290	8.6%	80	0.7%	370	2.6%	5.1%
Sheffield Hallam University	350	4.3%	10	0.2%	355	3.0%	0.1%
London South Bank University	310	7.2%	40	1.4%	350	4.8%	12.0%
The University of Wolverhampton	300	6.0%	40	1.4%	340	4.3%	0.2%
University of Hertfordshire	300	4.4%	15	0.9%	315	3.7%	4.6%
London Metropolitan University	280	4.8%	35	1.2%	310	3.6%	0.5%
University of the West of England, Bristol	265	3.8%	25	1.0%	290	3.0%	4.4%
Anglia Ruskin University	255	5.7%	20	0.4%	280	2.9%	2.6%
The University of Greenwich	200	3.2%	75	2.0%	275	2.7%	5.8%
The University of Westminster	255	5.3%	15	0.6%	275	3.6%	0.6%
The University of Nottingham	260	3.5%	5	0.8%	265	3.3%	16.7%
The University of Huddersfield	245	5.0%	10	0.3%	255	3.2%	7.2%
The Manchester Metropolitan University	215	2.4%	10	0.7%	225	2.2%	5.3%
Coventry University	215	4.1%	10	0.4%	220	3.0%	0.0%
The University of Northumbria at Newcastle	195	2.7%	25	0.8%	220	2.1%	7.7%
Canterbury Christ Church University	205	6.2%	15	0.5%	215	3.6%	4.4%
Middlesex University	190	3.4%	15	1.1%	210	2.9%	2.2%
De Montfort University	190	3.6%	15	1.0%	205	3.1%	0.4%



Access Entrants – Student Characteristics

Table 6 shows the gender split for entrants to undergraduate programmes in 2008/09.

Table 6: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Level, Entry Qualification and Gender 2008/09

Level	First-degree			Other UG			Total
	Access	Other	% Access	Access	Other	% Access	
Female	6425	230815	2.7%	2725	182115	1.5%	422085
Male	2625	193280	1.3%	525	100955	0.5%	297385
Total	9050	424100	2.1%	3250	283070	1.1%	719475

Excludes unknown qualification on entry. Total includes indeterminate gender.

The table shows that there are more females than males entering undergraduate programmes in 2008/09 and proportionately more females than males entering with an Access qualification. The difference is significant at both the First-degree and the Other undergraduate levels.

Table 7: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Entry Qualification, Mode and Age 2008/09

Entry Qualification	Access		Other		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Under 18	10	0	4330	6490	10830
18 to 20	1325	55	304385	20285	326055
21 to 24	2920	190	59375	37555	100040
25 to 29	2350	250	21835	45750	70185
30 and over	4320	875	29690	176290	211180
Unknown	0	0	40	1145	1190
Total	10925	1375	419655	287515	719475

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.

By comparison, the other entry qualifications show a more 'traditional' profile of ages. 73.6% of entrants to full-time undergraduate programmes are under 21 and 61.6% of the entrants to part-time programmes are 30 and over (the latter category being dominated by entrants to 'continuing education' courses).



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 2008/09

Level Entry Qualification	First-degree		Other UG		Total
	Access	Other	Access	Other	
White	5610	282030	2180	212150	501970
Black Caribbean	515	6655	145	4515	11830
Black African	1180	16060	485	9790	27515
Black other	90	1425	35	1135	2680
Indian	160	14775	30	5635	20600
Pakistani	220	10000	45	3440	13700
Bangladeshi	100	4000	15	1245	5360
Chinese	25	3405	10	1490	4930
Asian other	145	5565	40	3870	9625
Other	570	15680	135	7235	23625
Not known	220	8340	65	11070	19695
Total	8835	367935	3180	261580	641530

*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 2008/09. Entrants with Access qualifications are proportionately twice as likely to report a "specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia" as entrants with other qualifications, though the relatively high proportion of "not known" records in the "Other" category might be masking a different pattern.

Table 9: Entrants to Undergraduate Programmes by Level, Entry Qualification and Disability 2008/09

Level Entry Qualification	First-degree		Other UG		Total
	Access	Other	Access	Other	
No known disability	7825	362840	2865	219160	592690
Blind/partially sighted	25	650	5	445	1125
Deaf/hearing impairment	40	1090	25	1220	2380
Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	55	790	10	885	1745
Personal care support	0	35	0	35	70
Mental health difficulties	120	1850	30	1125	3125
An unseen disability(*)	165	4110	40	2930	7245
Multiple disabilities	100	2715	20	2170	5005
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	10	540	0	135	685
A specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia	570	15795	190	6310	22870
A disability not listed above	115	3160	25	2580	5880
Information refused	5	1150	0	855	2010
Not known	30	29370	35	45215	74650
Total	9050	424100	3250	283070	719475

Excludes unknown qualification on entry

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



Access Students - Qualifications Awarded

In 2008/09, 8,715 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 2008/09 to students who entered HE with an Access Qualification

	First-degree	Other UG	Total
Medicine & dentistry	20	5	20
Subjects allied to medicine	1535	2180	3715
Biological sciences	535	100	635
Veterinary sciences	0	0	0
Agriculture & related subjects	15	0	15
Physical sciences	95	20	115
Mathematical sciences	20	0	20
Computer science	165	65	230
Engineering & technology	80	30	110
Architecture, building & planning	40	20	60
Social studies	1170	145	1315
Law	210	50	260
Business & administrative studies	375	90	470
Mass communications and documentation	100	15	115
Languages	285	50	335
Historical and philosophical studies	195	25	220
Creative arts & design	295	75	370
Education	565	130	700
Combined	15	5	20
Total	5710	3005	8715

Table 11 shows the number 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 2008/09

	Access	Other	Total
First class	605	37265	37870
Upper second class	2365	128685	131050
Lower second class	2050	81105	83160
Third class / Pass	570	20765	21335
Unclassified	120	14720	14840
Classification not applicable	0	45	45
Total	5710	282590	288300

Excludes unknown qualification on entry

