

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 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.

It should be noted that the cohort of students used for PIs Access to HE data is based on the 2006/07 and 2007/08 student cohorts whereas the data in other HESA Access to HE tables is based on the 2008/09 student cohort. Caution is therefore advised when comparing these two sets of HESA data.

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 2006/07

Entry qualifications	Number of entrants	Non-continuation rates (%)
Access course (QAA recognised)	7195	13.3
Other access courses and foundation courses	6050	13.0
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers or equivalent with unknown or not applicable tariff score	10405	15.1
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with up to 160 tariff score or Baccalaureate	2965	12.9
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 160 and up to 200 tariff score	925	13.6
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 200 and up to 230 tariff score	495	13.1
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 230 and up to 290 tariff score	1210	14.2
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 290 tariff score	1730	10.6
ONC or OND (including BTEC & SQA equivalents) or VCEs	3930	15.9
Higher education qualification	21890	13.7

Other or unknown qualification	11710	19.4
All entry qualifications total	68500	14.8

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 2006/07

Subject of study	All entrants		Access course (QAA recognised) entrants	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
Subjects allied to medicine	11055	11.4	1845	13.3
Biological sciences	5820	16.7	825	15.3
Computer sciences	4240	20.6	225	17.2
Social studies	8195	13.5	1435	11.3
Law	2355	17.1	340	14.2
Business & administrative studies	7415	18.4	385	15.6
Languages	2725	14.7	360	11.7
Historical & philosophical studies	2130	15.4	245	16.2
Creative arts & design	7935	13.2	320	12.6
Education	3995	9.6	655	10.5
All other subjects (grouped)	12635	15.8	555	15.3
All subjects total	68500	14.8	7195	13.3

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 2007/08. 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 2007/08

Entry qualifications	Number in base population	Employment rates (including further study) (%)
Access course (QAA recognised)*	2925	88.7
Other access courses and foundation courses	2705	88.1
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers or equivalent with unknown or not applicable tariff score	3215	89.9
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with up to 160 tariff score or Baccalaureate	2355	89.8
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 160 and up to 200 tariff score	760	89.6
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 200 and up to 230 tariff score	465	90.5
A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 230 and up to 290 tariff score	1070	93.5

A-levels / AS levels / Scottish Highers, with over 290 tariff score	1925	91.9
ONC or OND (including BTEC & SQA equivalents) or VCEs	1710	85.2
Higher education qualification	11460	91.4
Other or unknown qualification	4695	89.4
All entry qualifications total	33280	90.1

* 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 2007/08

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	6910	95.4	935	93.9
Biological sciences	2295	89.4	250	87.0
Social studies	3875	90.3	555	85.8
Education	2495	95.8	295	95.6
All other subjects (grouped)	17710	87.2	885	83.4
All subjects total	33280	90.1	2925	88.7

* includes any students coded as qualent2 = 48

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