

## **The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**

### **Access to HE statistics summary (2008-09)**

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#### **Introduction**

The information presented here summarises statistical data about the number and type of Access to HE courses and students in the academic year 2008-09. Figures are derived from data received from the access validating agencies (AVAs), the partnership organisations which are licensed by QAA to recognise Access to HE courses in England and Wales. There were 15 AVAs in 2008-09.

Where it is available, data for the last five years is presented. However, since new subject categories were introduced in 2007-08 (Sector Subject Areas), and with the introduction of the Access to HE Diploma, a reliable time series is not available in all areas. Some changes also result from improved data collection or reporting, rather than real changes in the profile. Any assumptions about 'trends' should therefore be made with caution, especially where change is detected just between one year and another, or where numbers or percentage changes are relatively small.

The data presented provides an overview of Access to HE provision and is not intended to be used by organisations for setting internal targets or for benchmarking purposes.

## 1 Providers involved in delivering Access to HE courses

(see table 1, below)

### In 2008-09:

- there were **341** providers of Access to HE courses
- 321 providers were in England: 20 providers were in Wales
- **83 per cent** of Access to HE courses were delivered in further education (FE) colleges.

The number of providing FE colleges and higher education (HE) institutions both increased in 2008-09. The small overall decrease in the number of participating providers recorded in 2008-09 (from 349 to 341) is accounted for by the reduced number of sixth-form colleges, adult/community education and 'other' providers in 2008-09 compared to the previous year. In consequence, the percentage of providers which are FE colleges increased to 83 per cent in 2008-09, from 81 per cent in 2007-08. The number of providers has decreased every year since 2004-05, with a total percentage decrease of 16 per cent.

**Table 1: providers offering Access to HE courses**

Providers	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
FE colleges	332	82%	311	82%	306	83%	283	81%	284	83%
HE institutions	13	3%	17	5%	16	4%	12	3%	15	4%
Sixth-form colleges	15	4%	13	3%	12	3%	13	4%	9	3%
Adult/community education	26	6%	22	6%	23	6%	25	7%	21	6%
Other	19	5%	17	4%	14	4%	16	5%	12	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>		<b>380</b>		<b>371</b>		<b>349</b>		<b>341</b>	

## 2 Access to HE courses

(see table 2, below)

### In 2008-09:

- there were **1,540** Access to HE courses available and **1,376** courses running: 1,299 Access to HE courses running were in England: 77 courses were running in Wales
- there was an increase of 14 per cent in the number of courses running, although there was a decrease in the number of courses available
- **362** new courses were recognised.

2008-09 was the first year in the last five years in which the difference between the number of courses available and the number of courses running was less than 200. As a result of the introduction of the new Access to HE Diploma in 2007-08, existing courses were redeveloped and were newly validated as Diploma courses in 2006-07. Comparison of the number of courses with earlier years may therefore be misleading. Previous years' data is provided for information in table 2.

**Table 2: numbers of Access to HE courses available and running**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Courses available	1,506	1,341	1,258	1,557	1,540
<b>Courses running</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>1,211</b>	<b>1,376</b>
New courses recognised	88	50	286	243	362

### 3 Access to HE awards available

(see table 3, below)

The biggest increases/decreases in awards available between 2007-08 and 2008-09 were for Access to HE programmes leading to:

- Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine (+37)**
- Combined social sciences (+34)**
- Other education and training (+28)**
- Combined sciences (+23)**
- Other general and combined studies (-70)**
- Sociology and social policy (-14)**
- Other business, administration and law (-12)**
- Other arts, media and publishing (-12)**

Table 3 presents data about the 13 subject areas with the highest number of courses available and running. The subject category with the highest number of courses available and running in 2008-09 was 'Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine' which represented 15 per cent of all courses running. The subject category 'other general and combined studies', which in previous years had the highest number of courses available and running, had 70 fewer courses available and 28 fewer courses running in 2008-09 compared to 2007-08.

**Table 3: awards available and running**

	Courses available		Courses running		% all courses running 2008-09
	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08	
Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine	222	185	206	164	15%
Other health, public services and care	218	207	195	168	14%
Other general and combined studies	187	257	173	201	13%
Teaching and lecturing	113	109	97	91	7%
Science and mathematics	99	109	85	80	6%
Other social sciences	92	90	88	76	6%
Other business, administration and law	76	88	70	60	5%
Crafts, creative arts and design	71	73	63	59	5%
Other education and training	54	26	52	21	4%
Combined social sciences	50	16	48	11	3%
Other arts, media and publishing	49	61	41	43	3%
Sociology and social policy	48	62	38	49	3%
Combined sciences	48	25	47	20	3%

## 4 Learner registrations on Access to HE courses

(see tables 4a, 4b and 4c, below)

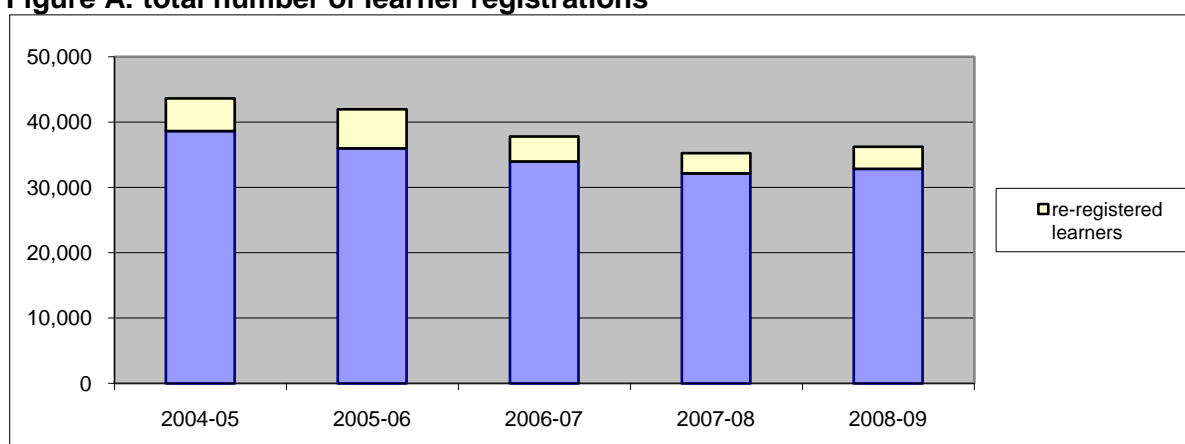
### In 2008-09:

- **36,230** learners were registered on QAA-recognised Access to HE courses
- 33,810 were registered on Access to HE courses in England: 2,420 learners were registered on courses in Wales.

**Table 4a: total number of learner registrations on Access to HE courses**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	<b>2008-09</b>
Total learner registrations ( <i>new learners</i> )	43,635 (38,670)	41,985 (35,990)	37,820 (34,010)	35,275 (32,165)	36,230 (32,850)
Learner registrations in England	41,450	39,120	35,015	32,760	33,810
Learner registrations in Wales	2,185	2,865	2,805	2,515	2,420

**Figure A: total number of learner registrations**



There was an increase of three per cent in the total number of Access to HE learner registrations in 2008-09 compared to 2007-08. There was a similar increase in the number of new learners, with a two per cent rise from 2007-08 to 2008-09.

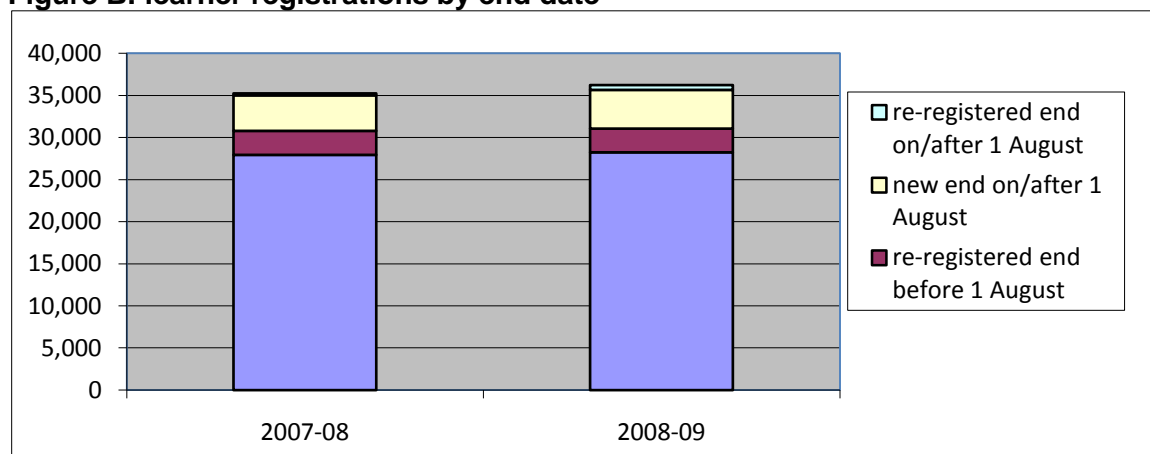
### In 2008-09:

- **31,090 (86 per cent)** Access to HE learners in England and Wales were registered to complete their courses within the same academic year
- 1,870 (77 per cent) Access to HE learners in Wales were registered to complete their courses within the same academic year.

**Table 4b: learner registrations by end date**

	2007-08	<b>2008-09</b>
New learners registered: expected end date before 1 August	27,955 (79%)	28,275 (78%)
Re-registered: expected end date before 1 August	2,850 (8%)	2,815 (8%)
New learners registered: expected end date on/after 1 August	4,210 (12%)	4,575 (13%)
Re-registered: expected end date on/after 1 August	255 (1%)	565 (2%)

**Figure B: learner registrations by end date**



**Table 4c: proportion of learners studying full time**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	<b>2008-09</b>
New learners registered: expected end date before 1 August and proportion of all learners	31,860 (73%)	29,880 (71%)	28,730 (76%)	27,955 (79%)	28,275 (78%)

The proportion of learners studying full-time on Access to HE courses is calculated using data based on assumptions of when learners were expected to complete the course, thereby providing an indication of the number of learners who studied on a full-time basis.

The data indicates that the proportion of learners studying full-time on Access to HE courses (new learners registered: expected end date before 1 August) has increased over the five-year period from 73 per cent in 2004-05 to 78 per cent in 2008-09.

All categories of registrations increased in 2008-09 except the category for learners who re-registered and were expected to finish by 1 August of the report year, which fell by just over one per cent.

The largest proportional rises were in the categories of learners who re-registered on the same course and were expected to finish after 2008-09, a rise of 310 learners (120 per cent), and new learners who were expected to finish after 2008-09, which increased by 360 (nine per cent).

## 5 Learner profile at registration

(see tables 5a - 5f, below)

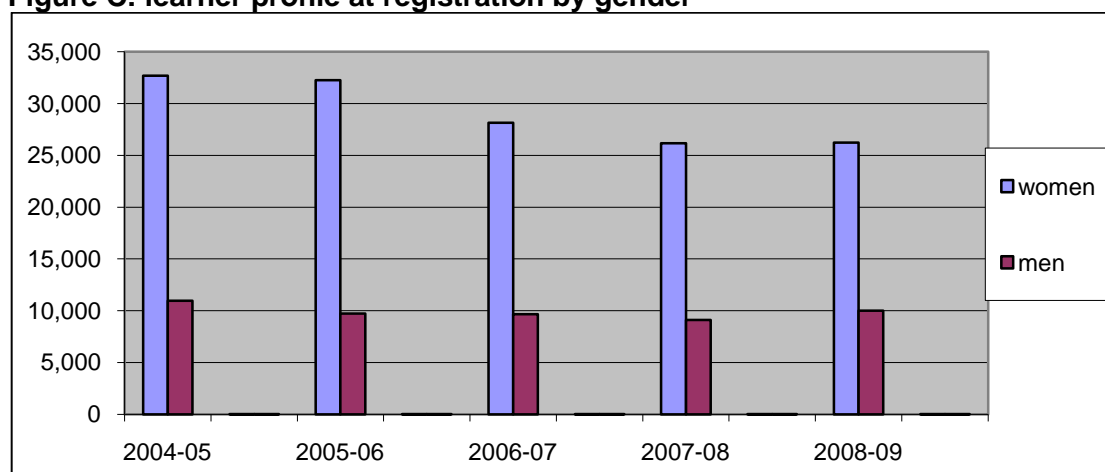
In 2008-09:

- **72 per cent** of Access to HE learners were women.

**Table 5a: Learner profile at registration (by gender)**

	2004-05		2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
women	32,680	75%	32,270	77%	28,155	74%	26,175	74%	26,220	<b>72%</b>
men	10,955	25%	9,715	23%	9,660	26%	9,095	26%	10,010	28%

**Figure C: learner profile at registration by gender**



The proportion of women registered on Access to HE courses decreased in 2008-09 to 72 per cent, compared to 74 per cent in 2007-08. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion of men learners from 26 per cent in 2007-08 to 28 per cent in 2008-09. The increase in the proportion of men has continued the trend since 2005-06 when men accounted for 23 per cent of all learners.

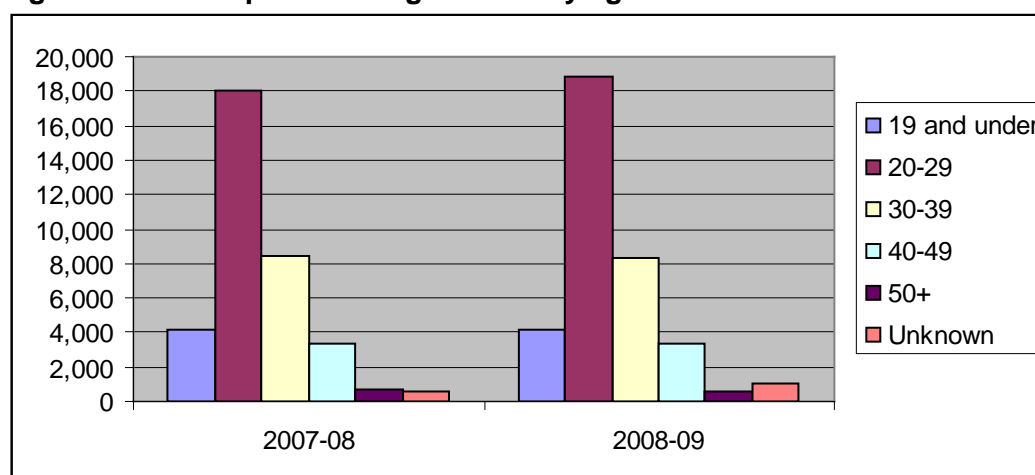
**Table 5b: learner profile at registration (by age and gender)**

	2007-08 all learners (% of total)	2008-09 all learners (% of total)	2008-09 female learners (% female learners)	2008-09 male learners (% male learners)
19 and under	4,185 (12%)	4,135 (11%)	2,735 (10%)	1,400 (14%)
20 – 24	11,235 (32%)	11,860 (33%)	8,095 (31%)	3,765 (38%)
25 - 29	6,785 (19%)	6,940 (19%)	5,275 (20%)	1,665 (17%)
30 – 34	4,615 (13%)	4,525 (12%)	3,495 (13%)	1,030 (10%)
35 - 39	3,870 (11%)	3,775 (10%)	2,950 (11%)	830 (8%)
40 – 44	2,275 (6%)	2,280 (6%)	1,760 (7%)	520 (5%)
45 - 49	1,105 (3%)	1,065 (3%)	815 (3%)	360 (4%)
50 +	660 (2%)	595 (2%)	410 (2%)	250 (3%)
Unknown	545 (2%)	1,050 (3%)	690 (3%)	185 (2%)
Total	35,275	36,230	26,220	10,010

**Table 5c: learner profile at registration (by age and year)**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
19 and under	3,035 (7%)	3,070 (7%)	3,045 (8%)	4,185 (12%)	4,135 (11%)
20-29	20,035 (46%)	18,755 (45%)	18,935 (50%)	18,025 (51%)	18,800 (52%)
30-39	13,420 (31%)	11,440 (27%)	9,705 (26%)	8,485 (24%)	8,305 (23%)
40-49	5,050 (12%)	4,600 (11%)	3,980 (11%)	3,380 (10%)	3,345 (9%)
50+	1,065 (2%)	940 (2%)	855 (2%)	660 (2%)	595 (2%)
Unknown	1,030 (2%)	3,180 (8%)	1,295 (3%)	545 (1%)	1,050 (3%)

**Figure D: learner profile at registration by age**



**In 2008-09:**

- **63 per cent** of Access to HE learners in 2008-09 **were under 30.**

The age group with the largest number of learners in 2008-08 was the 20-24 group which accounted for 33 per cent of all learners, an increase from the previous year when this group accounted for 32 per cent of all learners. There were also increases in 2008-09 compared to 2007-08 in the number of learners aged 25-29 years and a small increase in those aged 40-44 years. The number of learners in all other age categories fell in 2008-09 from the previous year.

Male learners tend to be younger than female learners, with 52 per cent of male learners being under 25, compared to 41 per cent of female learners. The number of unknowns increased from 545 in 2007-08 to 1,048 in 2008-09, which represented three per cent of all learners.

The proportion of learners aged under 30 years has increased from 53 per cent in 2004-05 to 63 per cent in 2008-09. The age category 30-39 had the largest decrease, from 31 per cent in 2004-05 to 23 per cent in 2008-09. The overall profile indicates that, in general, learners studying on Access to HE courses are younger than in previous years.

- **27 per cent** of Access to HE learners in 2008-09 were from **minority ethnic groups.**

**Table 5d: learner profile at registration (by ethnicity)**

	2008-09 female learners	2008-09 male learners	2007-08 all learners (% of total)	2008-09 all learners (% of total)
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	180	180	305 (1%)	365 (1%)
Asian or Asian British: Indian	310	210	410 (1%)	520 (1%)
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	475	310	615 (2%)	785 (2%)
Asian or Asian British: any other Asian	360	270	510 (1%)	630 (2%)
Black or Black British: African	2,055	1,125	2,750 (8%)	3,175 (9%)
Black or Black British: Caribbean	1,210	340	1,460 (4%)	1,550 (4%)
Black or Black British: any other	360	175	515 (1%)	535 (1%)
Chinese	100	70	255 (1%)	170 (0%)
Mixed: white and Asian	110	70	195 (1%)	180 (0%)
Mixed: white and black African	200	115	300 (1%)	315 (1%)
Mixed: white and black Caribbean	445	125	530 (2%)	570 (2%)
Mixed: any other	270	115	440 (1%)	385 (1%)
White: British	16,665	5,220	20,890 (59%)	21,885 (60%)
White: Irish	125	65	340 (1%)	190 (1%)
White: any other	745	315	1,225 (3%)	1,060 (3%)
Any other	480	260	735 (2%)	740 (2%)
Not known/not provided	2,135	1,040	3,810 (11%)	3,175 (9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,220</b>	<b>10,010</b>	<b>35,275</b>	<b>36,230</b>

The proportions of learners across the ethnicity categories in 2008-09 remained similar to previous years, with 15 per cent from black and black British groups; six per cent from Asian and Asian British groups; less than half a per cent from Chinese groups; six per cent from other groups; 64 per cent were white and, for nine per cent, ethnic background is unknown or not recorded.

**Table 5e: learner profile at registration (by disadvantage)\***

	2007-08 total learners in category (% of total)	2008-09 total learners in category (% of total)
From deprived area: postcode on LSC file	8,955 (27%)	11,305 (33%)
From deprived area: postcode not on LSC file	380 (1%)	290 (1%)
Other LSC widening participation category (funding claimed)	875 (3%)	990 (3%)
No funding claimed against widening participation category/no information	22,550 (69%)*	21,225 (63%)

\*excludes learners in Wales, where data on disadvantage is not collected.

The proportion of learners recorded as receiving LSC uplift funding increased to 37 per cent in 2008-09 compared to 31 per cent in 2007-08.

**In 2008-09:**

- **Nine per cent of Access to HE learners had a disability and/or learning difficulty.**

**Table 5f: learner profile at registration (by disability/learning difficulty)**

	2007-08 total learners in category (% of total)	2008-09 total learners in category (% of total)
Disability/ies	1,280 (4%)	1,425 (4%)
Learning difficulty/ies	985 (3%)	1,140 (3%)
Disability and learning difficulty/ies	845 (2%)	740 (2%)
No disability or learning difficulty	25,085 (71%)	27,700 (76%)
No information provided	7,075 (21%)	5,225 (14%)

The proportion of Access to HE learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in 2008-09 remained similar to previous years. The proportion for whom no information was provided decreased from the previous year, and represented 14 per cent of the total in 2008-09 compared to 21 per cent in 2007-08.

## 6 Learner completion and achievement

(see tables 6a - 6d, below)

### Learner completion: all registrations (see table 6a, below)

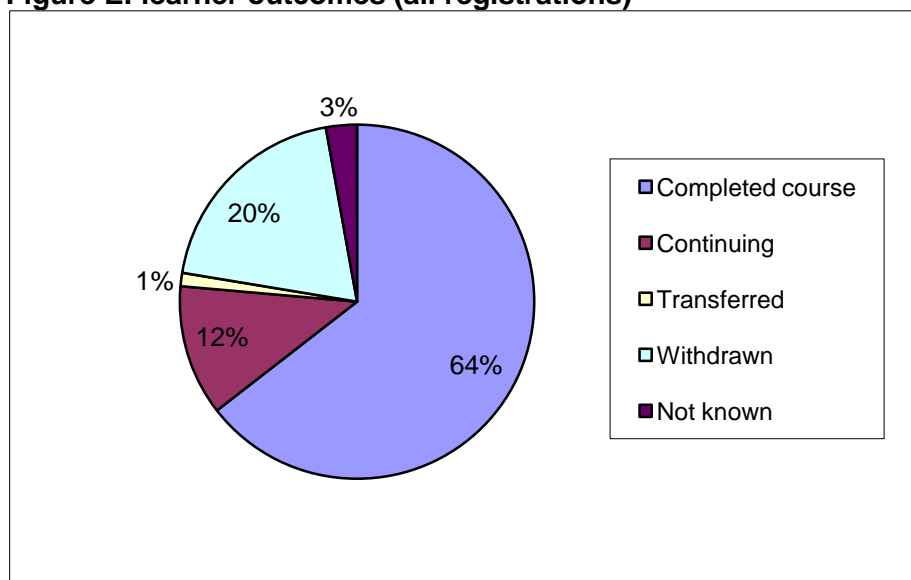
#### In 2008-09:

- **64 per cent** of all Access to HE students who registered on an Access to HE course **completed it in that year**
- A further **12 per cent** were expected to **continue their Access to HE studies in 2008-09**.

**Table 6a: learner outcomes (all registrations)**

	Study continuing	No achievement	Partial achievement	Access to HE qual awarded	Total learners (% of all learners)
Continuing	4,315	0	0	0	<b>4,315 (12%)</b>
<b>Completed course</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>2,035</b>	<b>19,765</b>	<b>23,365 (64%)</b>
Transferred	0	305	120	15	440 (1%)
Withdrawn	0	6,410	650	30	7,090 (20%)
Not known	0	810	65	150	1,025 (3%)
Total	4,315	9,085	2,875	19,960	36,230

**Figure E: learner outcomes (all registrations)**



### Learner achievement: accreditation of withdrawals

**Table 6b: withdrawals and proportion of all learners**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Withdrawn: partial accreditation	870 (2%)	415 (1%)	680 (2%)	760 (3%)	650 (2%)
Withdrawn: no accreditation	6,700 (15%)	6,405 (15%)	6,205 (16%)	5,805 (16%)	6,410 (18%)
Total withdrawn	7,570	6,820	6,885	6,565	7,060

The number of Access to HE learners who withdrew from their course of study increased to 7,058 in 2008-09, compared to 6,565 learners in 2007-08. The proportion of Access to HE learners who withdrew with no accreditation increased to 18 per cent of all learners, compared to 16 per cent in 2007-08, while the proportion who withdrew with partial accreditation fell from three per cent to two per cent of all learners. Of the total number of learners who withdrew (7,090), 650 received partial accreditation, 6,410 withdrew with no accreditation and 30 were awarded the Access to HE qualification.

### Learner achievement: award of Access to HE qualifications

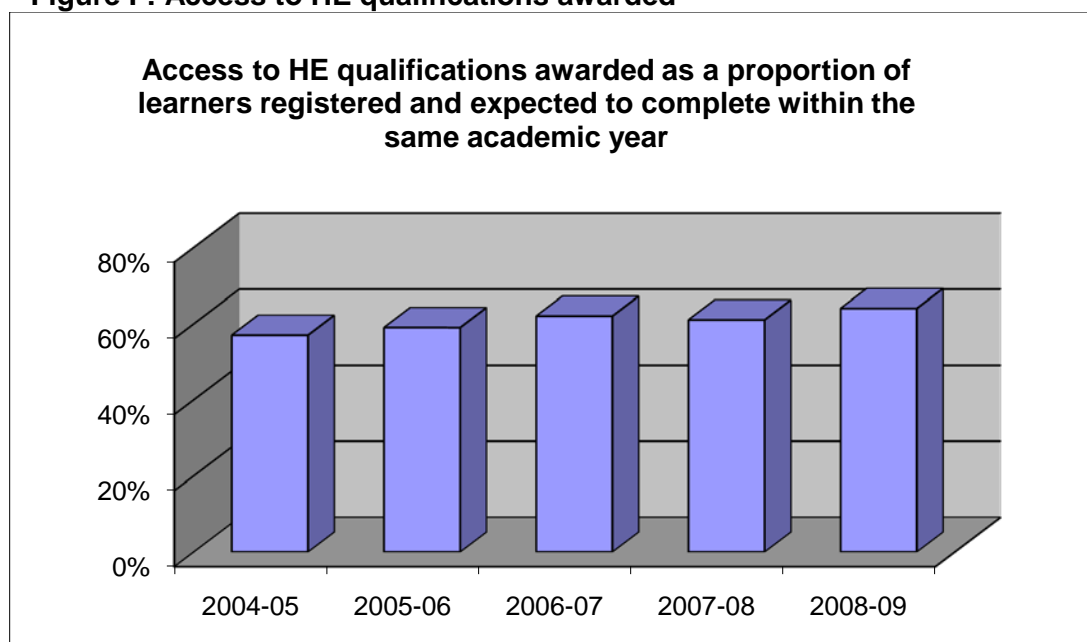
#### In 2008-09:

- **19,960 Access to HE qualifications** were awarded.
- (18,645 Access to HE qualifications were awarded in England: 1,315 qualifications were awarded in Wales).
- of those completing the Access to HE course, **85 per cent were awarded the Access to HE qualification**
- of those registered to complete the course within the same academic year, **64 per cent were awarded the Access to HE qualification.**

**Table 6c: Access to HE qualifications awarded**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	<b>2008-09</b>
Access to HE qualifications awarded	20,690	20,920	19,925	18,840	19,960
Access to HE qualifications awarded as a proportion of those registered and expected to complete within the same academic year	57%	59%	62%	61%	64%

The number of Access to HE qualifications awarded in 2008-09 increased, compared to the previous year. Sixty four per cent of the number who were expected to complete their Access to HE course before 1 August 2009 were awarded an Access to HE qualification within that year. This proportion is the highest that it has been over the past five years.

**Figure F: Access to HE qualifications awarded****Learner registrations and awards by subject (2008-09)****Table 6d: learner registrations and awards by subject**

	Learner registrations	Access to HE qualification awarded
Other general and combined studies	7,010	4,375
Nursing and subjects and vocations allied to medicine	6,440	3,400
Other health, public services and care	4,875	2,750
Other social sciences	1,670	920
Science and mathematics	1,500	955
Medicine and dentistry	1,365	885
Crafts, creative arts and design	1,355	815
Teaching and lecturing	1,345	780
Social studies combined with arts	1,275	630
Other business, administration and law	1,170	690
History, philosophy and theology	1,035	435

Table 6d (above) provides the subject areas with more than 1,000 students registered as learners together with the number of Access to HE qualifications awarded in those subject areas. Of the 27 subject areas for which data was provided, three subjects had fewer than 100 learners registered, 13 had between 100 and 1,000 learners registered and 11 had more than 1,000 registered learners. Twenty-four of the subject areas had more than 50 per cent qualifications awarded as a proportion of total learner registrations.

## 7 Learner progression: intended destination (of completers)

**Table 7: learner progression: intended destination**

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
HE course (in FE or HE institution)	14,775	12,760	11,815	13,755	13,790
FE course (in FE or HE institution)	1,050	850	895	675	600
Employment	1,395	1,400	1,155	1,090	970
Other	850	1,185	610	690	925
Intended destination unknown	12,110	13,890	14,155	9,090	8,275

The number of Access to HE students whose intended destination was recorded as 'HE course (in FE or HE institution)' increased slightly in 2008-09, while the number whose intended destination was FE course or employment fell.

However, although the number of unknowns has decreased significantly over the five-year period, they still represent 23 per cent of all learner intended destinations in 2008-09, so comparisons with previous years may be unreliable.