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Issues paper

This report is for information

This report updates HEFCE report 2007/03. It describes key characteristics of foundation degree programmes and students. It covers the trends in student numbers, the characteristics of programmes, attributes of students, students' feedback, progression and qualification rates, progression to further study and employment outcomes, and support from employers.

Foundation degrees

Key statistics 2001-02 to 2007-08

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Foundation degrees: key statistics 2001-02 to 2007-08

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Of interest to those responsible for	Student data, Widening participation, Learning and teaching
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Summary

Purpose

1. This document updates HEFCE report 2007/03 describing the characteristics of foundation degree programmes. The attributes, progression, achievement, attitudes and post-qualification outcomes of students on those programmes and the support they received from their employers are also presented.

Key points

2. HEIs and FECs have reported that nearly 72,000 students were registered, or were expected to register, on foundation degree programmes in 2007-08. Over 40,000 entrants were reported for 2007-08 compared to 34,000 in 2006-07 and, even with no more growth in entrants, we would expect total student numbers to rise to about 97,000 before 2010 as current cohorts move through their foundation degree programmes.

3. This detailed picture of foundation degree provision confirms the one reported previously based on the analysis of cohorts one year earlier. Because of the year-on-year expansion of foundation degree provision, these new results are based on larger numbers and are correspondingly more reliable.

Selected results

4. Here we set out a small selection of this report's results. In all cases the results refer to the most recent data available. Further details can be found in the main sections of the report.

Characteristics of foundation degree programmes

5. For home entrants to programmes in the academic year 2005-06 we found:

- 62 per cent studied full-time
- 44 per cent were taught wholly or partly at higher education institutions (HEIs) and 56 per cent wholly at further education colleges (FECs)
- almost half were studying the three most common subjects: education, business and art and design
- 92 per cent of full-time students were on programmes of two years or shorter
- 70 per cent of part-time students were on programmes of three years or shorter and 27 per cent were on programmes of two years or shorter
- distance learning was the main means of study for 16 per cent of part-time students.

Student attributes

6. For home entrants to programmes in the academic year 2005-06 we found:

- 57 per cent were female
- 65 per cent were aged 21 or over when they started their course.

Highest qualification on entry

7. We can only estimate the proportion of foundation degree students with A-levels at between 11 and 33 per cent, with the upper end of the range being the more likely.

Seventeen per cent entered with higher education qualifications.

Student feedback on the quality of programmes

8. Seventy-six per cent of students in their final year, or a significant way through their course, and who responded to the 2007 National Student Survey, agreed with the statement, 'overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course'.

9. Fifty-six per cent agreed with the statement, 'the course is well organised and is running smoothly'. This is an increase from 2006, in part reflecting the increased proportion of relatively well-established programmes.

Progression through foundation degree programmes for students registered at an HEI

10. Our analysis of students' progression through their foundation degree courses was based on students who studied programmes following a standard academic year and of specific expected length, and who were registered at HEIs.

11. For entrants in 2004-05 following a full-time, two-year programme, 56 per cent received a higher education (HE) award by 2005-06. Almost all of these were foundation degree awards. A further 23 per cent were still studying at HE level, mostly for a foundation degree.

12. For part-time students on three-year courses who entered in 2003-04, slightly lower proportions of students had received an HE qualification (51 per cent) and 28 per cent were still studying at HE level in 2005-06

Progression from foundation to honours degree programmes for students registered at an HEI

13. Over half (54 per cent) of the students registered at an HEI who qualified with a foundation degree in 2004-05 went on to study an honours degree in 2005-06.

14. Most students continued their studies registered at the same HEI and of these only 3 per cent were effectively 'starting again' by entering at the beginning of the programme. Eighty-eight per cent of students going on to honours courses at the same HEI were credited with the equivalent of full-time study for two years on an honours degree programme. For the minority of qualifiers who changed institution, 14 per cent entered at the beginning of the new programme, while 60 per cent were credited with the full two years of study or more.

15. Of those foundation degree qualifiers registered at an HEI who went into the final year of an honours programme in 2005-06, 76 per cent were reported as graduating in that year.

After qualifying: employment outcomes

16. Information on employment outcomes six months after qualifying is based on all the students who qualified with foundation degrees at HEIs in 2005-06 and responded to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. We found:

- a. Nearly half of the foundation degree qualifiers in employment were in graduate jobs, with about 90 per cent stating 'positive' reasons for taking the job.
- b. Apart from male qualifiers from part-time study, salary levels were low. The median pro rata salary was typically £15,000 per year for full-time male and both full- and part-time female qualifiers.

17. The longitudinal DLHE survey taken three and a half years after qualifying provided information on qualifiers from 2002-03, typically those who qualified from the very first pilot foundation degree programmes. This showed that after three and a half years the proportion of those in employment was 87 per cent compared to 62 per cent after six months. Of those

in employment after three and a half years, 54 per cent were in graduate jobs, compared to 38 per cent six months after qualifying.

Employer support for part-time students

18. From the DLHE survey we found that most 2005-06 qualifiers from part-time study (80 per cent) at HEIs had some support from their employers, such as study leave, but only 36 per cent received any financial support. From the student records we can estimate that about one in four part-time students at HEIs and FECs have their fee paid by their employers.

Conclusions and policy implications

19. These results further support the conclusions and policy implications set out the first set of key statistics reported last year (HEFCE 2007/03).

Growth of foundation degree provision

20. The growth in the number of students on foundation degree programmes continued for 2007-08 with an increase of 6,500 entrants, somewhat smaller than for the previous year. It is not certain whether this reduced growth rate is real or due to inaccuracies in the estimates of entrant numbers but, whatever the reason, it means we have no clear trend from which to extrapolate future student numbers. However, even if there were no further increases in the numbers of entrants, we would expect total student numbers to rise to about 97,000 before 2010. The government target of 100,000 students by 2010 should be met even if the future growth in numbers of students were to fall from over 11,000 to 8,000 per annum.

21. There have been two developments that could impact on the numbers of students on foundation degree programmes in future. Firstly, some further education colleges may be given powers to award foundation degrees. This may reduce the time it takes to introduce new programmes. Secondly, government announced its intention to stop providing funds for students with higher education qualification from studying towards equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs), but with an exemption for students on foundation degree programmes. In 2005-06 nearly one in four entrants to part-time foundation degree programmes had an HE qualification, so these programmes are already providing opportunities for those with HE qualifications. With the introduction of the ELQs policy and with the exemption for foundation degree programmes, it may be that foundation degree programmes will see an increase in demand from students with HE qualifications.

Widening participation

22. This further evidence supports the conclusion that foundation degrees will both attract people from a 'broader range of backgrounds' and provide alternative routes into higher education for those who are not the 'traditional A-level school leaver', as envisaged in the original government consultation.

Organisation of courses

23. With the majority of foundation degree programmes established for two or more years, the responses to the question about the organisation of courses in the 2007 National Student Survey (NSS) were more positive than the year before. However, there is still evidence that more work needs to be done to ensure the smooth running of courses.

Balancing study with work and other responsibilities — flexible provision

24. Foundation degrees generally are not 'flexible' in the ways often envisaged. More than half of students entered full-time programmes, there is little movement between full and part-time programmes or between institutions and most programmes have a definite course length. However, when students do change mode of study or institution, most progress to the next year of the programme, so some sort of recognition of previous study, through a credit scheme or otherwise, must be operating.

25. Comments made by students through the most recent National Student Survey reinforce the earlier feedback suggesting that flexibility may not be the only, or even most important, feature to help students juggle work, study and other responsibilities. They point to the need for stability and a timetable that is known well in advance.

Progression and achievement

26. The completion rates reported here, being based on later cohorts, are based on bigger cohort sizes than those reported previously. The new figures generally confirm what was reported previously, with about half of the students gaining an HE qualification within the expected course length and about a quarter of students still studying. The main exceptions are part-time two-year programmes, where one in three or fewer students qualify in the expected time. As long as there are ways to extend study time there is no harm in aiming to complete in two years, but institutions should look at the outcomes of these programmes. Where only a minority of students complete within the expected time, institutions should ensure that prospective students are aware of this and are prepared to study over a longer time period.

27. There is further evidence that most students progressing to honours degrees do so smoothly, with their foundation degree programme fully recognised as equivalent to two years of full-time honours degree study. A higher proportion of the 2004-05 foundation degree qualifiers who progressed to honours programmes graduated than the previous cohort, but there is still some evidence that a minority of students may have difficulty with the transition.

Support from employers

28. The evidence suggests that students, even part-time students, do not get their tuition fees paid by their employer or any other financial support. This underlines the challenge of the employer engagement programmes, to develop provision such that employers will be willing to make a contribution significantly greater than the fee.

Describing foundation degree programmes

The academic subject classification (JACS) is not always well suited to describing foundation degrees. The new HESA record being collected for 2007-08 will facilitate the identification of courses and it is hoped that future reports will be able to describe foundation degree provision in ways that will be more recognisable to stakeholders.

Action required

29. No action is required in response to this document.

Introduction

30. This is the second report providing key statistics relating to foundation degrees¹. The aim, as with the first report, is to help make an assessment of foundation degree provision.

31. For this report we repeated the analysis described in the first report with cohorts from one year later. For example, we look at the attributes of foundation degree entrants for 2005-06.

32. In order to facilitate comparisons with what was reported earlier, exactly the same table numbering has been used, so that a table with the same number corresponds to the same statistics for the cohort from one year earlier contained in the first report.

33. In some cases, where the change from year to year may be of particular interest, additional tables have been created showing the percentage change. There are also additional tables describing the details of the subjects studied as well as some results from the new survey of qualifiers three and a half years after they qualified. These additional tables are numbered 99a, 99b, etc. to preserve the number order of the tables found in the first report.

¹ For an outline of the history of foundation degrees and the policy concerns they were designed to address, see the introduction to the first report 'Foundation degrees: Key statistics 2001-02 to 2006-07' (HEFCE 2007a).

Sources and definitions

Data sources

Aggregate student data

34. The HEFCE aggregate Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) and Higher Education in Further Education: Student Survey (HEIFES) returns (HEFCE 2007b, 2007c) provide only limited information, while registrations after 1 December are predictions. However, these data are the most recent available (up to 2007-08) and are therefore used for the time series of numbers of students and entrants.

Individualised student data

35. Data are drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student records and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Individualised Learner Records (ILRs). Individual students were linked within and through each annual student dataset using 'fuzzy matching'². This enables duplicate records to be removed where, for example, a student has been returned on both HESA and ILR records. It also provides the basis for the progression and completion statistics.

36. In addition, data from the National Student Survey (NSS), the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey and the DLHE longitudinal survey are used, though these data are only currently collected for students registered at HEIs.

Reconciliation of aggregate and individual data

37. The totals reported from the aggregate and individual returns do not exactly align. We explain this difference at Annex A.

Definitions for analysis and comparisons

Population definitions

38. The statistics reported here refer to students studying or qualifying from FECs and HEIs in England³. The tables on overall trends and the breakdown of total numbers by domicile include home, EU and overseas students. All the other tables refer to home students only. We provide full definitions of the populations at Annex D of the 2007 report (HEFCE 2007a).

39. Wherever possible we present statistics relating to students registered at HEIs and FECs. However, as noted above, the NSS, the DLHE and the longitudinal DLHE surveys are currently only collected for students registered at HEIs. Further, some data items on the

² The matching process is described at Annex B of HEFCE 2006/16 available at: www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_16/

³ The statistics relating to the progression from foundation degree study or qualification includes progression to HE at HEIs throughout the UK.

HESA student record are not available, at least with usable accuracy, for data collected from FECs.

Cohorts

40. We have aimed to present the most complete and up-to-date information available. This means that different sections refer to different cohorts of students. The statistics are presented as follows:

- students studying in a given academic year are referred to as 'students'
- a cohort of students that started in a given year are referred to as 'entrants'
- a cohort qualifying in a given year are referred to as 'qualifiers'.

41. Table 1 below shows the most recent entry cohort relating to different statistics. For feedback, progression and employment statistics these relate to students on two year programmes. Statistics for longer programmes will refer to entrants in earlier years.

Table 1 **Most recent entry cohorts**

Statistic	Most recent entry cohort (two year programmes)
Counts of students and entrants	2007-08
Programme characteristics	2005-06
Attributes of entrants	2005-06
Student feedback	2005-06
Progression from year of entry, qualification rates	2004-05
Progression to honours programme	2003-04
Employment outcomes shortly after qualifying	2004-05
Employment outcomes three and a half years after qualifying	2001-02

Presentation of statistics

42. Throughout this report we have rounded student numbers to the nearest five. Where no source is cited, the data sources are the HESA student record for students registered at HEIs and the LSC ILR for students registered at FECs.

43. Where students are simply identified as being 'at' an HEI or FEC, this refers to the institution where the students are registered, not necessarily where they are taught.

44. All the figures in the tables refer to headcounts, as do those in the text, apart from where it is explicitly stated the reference is to full-time equivalents.

Growth in foundation degree provision

45. Table 2 shows how the numbers of students and entrants have grown from 2001-02 through to 2007-08.

Table 2 **Number of foundation degree students and entrants by year and mode of study**
(Home, EU and overseas students and entrants at HEIs and FECs in England)

Students				
Academic year	Full-time	Part-time	Total	% full-time
2001-02	2,530	1,795	4,320	59%
2002-03	6,295	6,015	12,310	51%
2003-04	12,240	11,710	23,945	51%
2004-05	19,780	18,040	37,820	52%
2005-06	26,910	19,870	46,780	58%
2006-07	33,855	26,725	60,580	56%
2007-08	40,820	31,095	71,915	57%

Entrants				
Academic year	Full-time	Part-time	Total	% full-time
2001-02	2,260	1,740	3,995	57%
2002-03	4,805	4,095	8,900	54%
2003-04	8,250	6,695	14,945	55%
2004-05	12,890	9,220	22,110	58%
2005-06	16,810	9,850	26,665	63%
2006-07	19,840	14,095	33,930	58%
2007-08	24,440	16,005	40,445	60%

Table 2 notes

Data source: Columns 1 + 2 of HESES and HEIFES (2007-08 values are provisional).

The numbers of overseas entrants for 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 are estimated by assuming they represent the same proportion as for the other years, that is 4.6 per cent for full-time and 5.5 per cent for part-time.

2001-02 student numbers include some continuing students from 2000-01 which were marketed as foundation degrees but which may not have had all the attributes described in the HEFCE foundation degree prospectus.

46. In the previous report we noted that the part-time numbers in 2005-06 were only slightly higher than in 2004-05, and then there was a large increase in 2006-07. We now think that this 'stop go' pattern was probably due to overestimates in 2004-05. The numbers of students registered after 1 December are based on forecasts and, clearly, making accurate forecasts will be more difficult when the programmes are new. Such uncertainties affect part-time estimates more than full-time, because a higher proportion of programmes do not follow the standard academic year. (See annex A for more details.)

47. The most recent figures for both the numbers of students and entrants show a smaller absolute increase than the year before. Whether this is real, or due to more difficulties with the forecasts, is not clear. What it does mean is that we do not have a smooth trend to

extrapolate future growth. All we can say is that the growth in the number of entrants has averaged around 6,000 per annum since foundation degrees were established. As discussed previously, it is very difficult to predict what future growth rates will be.

48. There have been two developments that could impact on the numbers of students on foundation degree programmes in future. Firstly, the law has been changed to allow some further education colleges to make foundation degrees awards⁴. This may reduce the time it takes to introduce new programmes. Secondly, government announced its intention to stop providing funds from 2008-09 for new students with higher education qualifications from studying towards equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs), but with an exemption for students on foundation degree programmes (HEFCE 2007d). In 2005-06 nearly one in four entrants to part-time foundation degree programmes had an HE qualification, so these programmes are already providing opportunities for those with HE qualifications. With the introduction of the ELQs policy and with the exemption for foundation degree programmes, it may be that demand for foundation degree programmes in future will increase as some of those seeking programmes leading to ELQs apply to foundation degrees. There are currently about 40,000 FTE undergraduate ELQ students who would not be funded under the new arrangements. Many of these are on very low intensity programmes so that foundation degrees would not provide an alternative, but demand for foundation degrees should, to some extent, be increased.

49. The proportions of HEIs and FECs involved with foundation degrees continues to increase. Table 3 shows the numbers and proportions of institutions with either students registered at the institution, or students taught at the institution and registered at another⁵.

Table 3 HEIs and FECs in England involved with foundation degree provision

Academic year	Pre-92 HEIs		Post-92 HEIs		FECs		
	Number	% of HEIs	Number	% of HEIs	Number	% of all FECs	% of FECs (not 6 th form colleges)
2001-02	13	26%	37	46%	47	12%	16%
2002-03	13	25%	46	57%	88	22%	30%
2003-04	11	22%	57	71%	160	41%	55%
2004-05	19	38%	64	80%	255	65%	88%
2005-06	22	44%	71	85%	260	68%	91%

Table 3 note

Date sources:

- registrations - Columns 1 and 2 of HESES and HEIFES
- tuition and registered with other institution - ILR and HESA
- numbers of FECs 'Delivering the Further Education (FE) Book of Facts', published by DCSF/DIUS, accessed at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000667/tablesV2.html (6 August 2007).

⁴ The Further Education and Training Act 2007

⁵ For 2005-06, data provided by Foundation Degree Forward showed that four institutions (pre-92 HEIs) provided validation without also providing tuition either directly or through a franchise arrangement.

50. The further education (FE) sector includes sixth form colleges, which do not normally provide HE tuition. Exceptionally, in 2004-05, one sixth form college, which later changed its status, had foundation degree provision. If we exclude sixth form colleges we see that by 2005-06 over 90 per cent of general, specialist and tertiary colleges provided foundation degree programmes.

51. Total numbers of foundation degree students should continue to grow as the impact of past increases in the numbers of entrants works through, with entrant numbers for 2007-08 implying an equilibrium 'steady state' figure of about 97,000⁶. The entrant numbers in Table 2 show a continuing increase and, if this continues, then the overall number of foundation degree students will increase beyond this figure⁷. Even if the growth in total student numbers declines from the current rate of over 11,000 per annum to 8,000 per annum, the government target (DIUS 2008) of 100,000 by 2010 should be met⁸.

⁶ Assuming full-time students average two years of study and part-time students three years we would have $2 \times 24,440 + 3 \times 16,005 = 96,895$. Not all students will complete their programme of study, but some will repeat years, so this provides a reasonable if rough estimate of the equilibrium number implied by the 2007-08 entrant numbers.

⁷ As of 14 Jan 2008, Foundation Degree Forward reported 799 courses in development. This can be compared with 2,552 courses up and running.

⁸ This is interpreting 2010 to mean the academic year 2010-11.

Programme characteristics

Introduction

52. In this section we present the characteristics of foundation programmes. All the statistics relate to the academic year 2005-06 and are based on HESA and LSC individualised student records. The statistics relate to home entrants to foundation degree programmes at HEIs and FECs in that year. The characteristics described are:

- type of foundation degree provider
- region of foundation degree provision
- subject of study
- expected course length
- distance learning and distance to study.

Type of foundation degree provider

53. Table 4 shows the numbers of entrants by the institution where they are registered and where they are taught. The overall pattern is similar to that found for 2004-05, with a majority of part-time entrants registered and taught at an HEI and a majority of full-time entrants taught at FECs. Overall 44 per cent were taught wholly or partly at HEIs and 56 per cent wholly at FECs.

Table 4 **Entrant numbers by institution type**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Institution		Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
Reg.	Taught	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
HEI	HEI	5,920	35%	5,555	54%	11,475	43%	52%
HEI	HEI and FEC	275	2%	65	1%	340	1%	81%
HEI	FEC	6,400	38%	2,545	25%	8,945	33%	72%
FEC	FEC	4,145	25%	2,035	20%	6,180	23%	67%
Total		16,740	16,740	100%	10,200	100%	26,940	62%

Table 4 notes

- Reg.: Registered.
- Where a franchise institution is unknown then this is assumed to be an FEC.
- The type of institution where students are taught strictly only refers to their year of entry, though most will continue at the same type of institution for the whole programme. (See HEFCE Report 2007/03 paragraph 70.)

54. Table 4a shows the percentage increase in entrant numbers between 2004-05 and 2005-06. We see that, overall, both full- and part-time entrant numbers increased by 23-24 per cent. Numbers increased for all combinations of institution type and mode, with the

largest increases for provision where the student was registered at an HEI and wholly or partly taught at an FEC.

Table 4a **Increases in entrant numbers between 2004-05 and 2005-06 by institution type**

(Home foundation degree entrants at HEIs and FECs in England)

Institution		Full-time	Part-time	Total
Reg.	Taught			
HEI	HEI	16%	21%	19%
HEI	HEI and FEC	48%	35%	45%
HEI	FEC	32%	35%	33%
FEC	FEC	21%	14%	18%
Total		24%	23%	24%

Region of provision

55. Table 5 below shows the region of provision; that is, where the teaching takes place, not the location of the administrative centre of the institution where students are registered.

Table 5 **Entrant numbers by region of provision**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Region	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time	% of population (20-29) ⁹
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
North East	1,655	10%	730	8%	2,385	9%	69%	5%
North West	2,260	13%	1,760	19%	4,020	15%	56%	13%
Yorkshire	1,795	11%	1,215	13%	3,010	11%	60%	10%
East Midlands	970	6%	755	8%	1,725	7%	56%	8%
West Midlands	1,115	7%	1,315	14%	2,430	9%	46%	10%
East	1,325	8%	770	8%	2,095	8%	63%	10%
London	2,710	16%	795	8%	3,505	13%	77%	20%
South East	1,985	12%	1,340	14%	3,325	13%	60%	15%
South West	2,925	17%	820	9%	3,745	14%	78%	9%
Total (ex. OU)	16,740	100%	9,505	100%	26,240	100%	64%	100%
OU	0		700		700		0%	
Total (inc. OU)	16,740		10,200		26,940		62%	

Table 5 notes

Yorkshire: Yorkshire and the Humber region

East: East of England region

OU: Open University

⁹ Population figures are from the Office of National Statistics mid year estimates for 2005. See www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vink=9585 for further details.

56. Table 5a shows the percentage increase in entrant numbers between 2004-05 and 2005-06 by region. All regions saw an increase in both full- and part-time entrants.

Table 5a Increases in entrant numbers between 2004-05 and 2005-06 by region of provision

(Home foundation degree entrants at HEIs and FECs in England)

Region	Full-time	Part-time	Total
North East	7%	42%	18%
North West	20%	11%	16%
Yorkshire	36%	26%	32%
East Midlands	32%	35%	33%
West Midlands	32%	3%	16%
East	12%	7%	10%
London	17%	13%	16%
South East	45%	42%	44%
South West	20%	33%	23%
Total (ex. OU)	24%	22%	23%
OU		37%	37%
Total (inc. OU)	24%	23%	24%

Table 5a notes

Yorkshire: Yorkshire and the Humber region

East: East of England region

OU: Open University

57. The South East region saw the greatest percentage increase. This region had the lowest number of entrants, relative to its 20-29 year-old population in 2004-05.

Subject of study

58. Table 6 shows the numbers of entrants by subject area based on the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS)¹⁰.

¹⁰ Details of the JACS code can be found on the HESA web-site at: www.hesa.ac.uk/jacs/jacs.htm

Table 6 Entrant numbers by subject area

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Subject area	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Medicine and dentistry*	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
Subjects allied to medicine	1,445	9%	785	8%	2,230	8%	65%
Biological sciences	1,040	6%	165	2%	1,205	4%	86%
Veterinary science	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
Agriculture and related subjects	1,255	7%	390	4%	1,645	6%	76%
Physical sciences	180	1%	40	0%	220	1%	81%
Mathematical sciences	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Computer sciences	1,595	10%	675	7%	2,270	8%	70%
Engineering and technology	925	6%	460	4%	1,385	5%	67%
Architecture, building, planning	270	2%	465	5%	730	3%	37%
Social studies	1,180	7%	1,205	12%	2,385	9%	49%
Law	145	1%	180	2%	325	1%	45%
Business, admin studies	2,215	13%	1,870	18%	4,085	15%	54%
Mass comms, documentation	425	3%	30	0%	455	2%	94%
Languages	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
Historical, philosophical studies	80	0%	180	2%	265	1%	31%
Creative arts and design	3,635	22%	350	3%	3,985	15%	91%
Education	1,695	10%	3,220	32%	4,915	18%	35%
Combined	655	4%	190	2%	845	3%	77%
All subjects	16,740	100%	10,200	100%	26,940	100%	62%

Table 6 notes

* A small number of entrants were recorded as studying medicine and dentistry. It has been assumed that these were coding errors and they have been included within the 'other' subgroup of 'subjects allied to medicine'.

59. Education, creative arts and business again had the largest numbers of entrants and together accounted for almost half (48 per cent) of the entrants. A further six subject areas — subjects allied to medicine, social studies, computer sciences, engineering, agriculture and biological sciences — had more than 1,000 entrants. Together the nine most popular subjects accounted for 89 per cent of all entrants, the same proportion as in 2004-05. However, within this overall total there were some significant changes in the 'market share' of different subjects. This is a consequence of the differing growth rates, shown in Table 6a. The nine subjects with the largest number of entrants are presented with a grey background.

60. We can see that for most of these subjects the total growth in the number of entrants was between 20 per cent and 31 per cent, but the number of entrants to programmes in the biological sciences only grew by 16 per cent, with a marked reduction in the number of part-time entrants. The increase in the number of entrants to programmes in engineering was only 2 per cent for full- and part-time study.

Table 6a Increases in entrant numbers between 2004-05 and 2005-06 by subject area

(Home foundation degree entrants at HEIs and FECs in England)

Subject area	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Medicine and dentistry			
Subjects allied to medicine	30%	8%	21%
Biological sciences	38%	-122%	16%
Veterinary science			
Agriculture and related subjects	27%	26%	27%
Physical sciences	50%	7%	42%
Mathematical sciences			
Computer sciences	27%	39%	31%
Engineering and technology	2%	2%	2%
Architecture, building, planning	43%	45%	45%
Social studies	34%	20%	27%
Law	-95%	88%	6%
Business, admin studies	17%	45%	29%
Mass comms, documentation	5%	-25%	3%
Languages			
Historical, philosophical studies	5%	50%	36%
Creative arts and design	27%	35%	28%
Education	29%	16%	20%
Combined	19%	4%	16%
All subjects	24%	23%	24%

Table 6a notes

Grey background indicates more than 1,000 entrants in 2005-06.

61. Table 7 shows more detailed breakdowns of some of the subject areas and provides further insights into some of the important subject areas. From Table 7 we see that over 1,000 entrants are taking Sports Science, and that this accounts for 85 per cent of those students included under the heading 'biological sciences'. It should also be noted that there were 1,485 of entrants to 'social work' programmes and these accounted for 62 per cent of the entrants to social studies.

Table 7 Entrant numbers by subject sub-group for selected subject areas
(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Subject	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Medical science and pharmacy	120	8%	15	2%	135	6%	89%
Nursing	400	28%	50	6%	450	20%	89%
Other	920	64%	720	92%	1640	74%	56%
Subjects allied to medicine	1,445	100%	785	100%	2,230	100%	65%
Biology and related sciences	115	11%	50	30%	165	14%	69%
Sports science	920	88%	105	65%	1,025	85%	90%
Psychology	10	1%	10	5%	15	1%	53%
Biological sciences	1,040	100%	165	100%	1,205	100%	86%
Mechanically based	425	46%	270	59%	700	51%	61%
Electronic and electrical	80	9%	40	9%	120	9%	66%
Civil, chemical and other	125	14%	60	13%	185	13%	68%
Technology	265	29%	55	12%	325	23%	83%
Combined engineering	25	3%	30	7%	60	4%	46%
Engineering and technology	925	100%	460	100%	1,385	100%	67%
Economics	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
Politics	115	10%	25	2%	140	6%	83%
Sociology, social policy, anthropology	515	44%	245	20%	760	32%	68%
Social work	550	47%	935	78%	1,485	62%	37%
Human and social geography	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	n/a
Social studies	1,180	100%	1,205	100%	2,385	100%	49%
Business	900	41%	665	35%	1,565	38%	58%
Management	835	38%	1,045	56%	1,880	46%	44%
Finance and accounting	45	2%	50	3%	95	2%	48%
Tourism, transport, travel	415	19%	95	5%	510	12%	82%
Combined business/admin	20	1%	20	1%	35	1%	49%
Business and admin studies	2,215	100%	1,870	100%	4,085	100%	54%
Art and design	1,770	49%	225	64%	1,995	50%	89%
Performing arts	1,170	32%	65	18%	1,235	31%	95%
Other creative arts	690	19%	65	18%	755	19%	92%
Creative arts and design	3,635	100%	350	100%	3,985	100%	91%
Teacher training	160	9%	335	10%	495	10%	32%
Education studies	1,430	84%	2,880	89%	4,310	88%	33%
Combined education	105	6%	5	0%	110	2%	95%
Education	1,695	100%	3,220	100%	4,915	100%	35%

62. Even the more detailed subject breakdown shown in Table 7 does not adequately describe some programmes. Selected subjects were examined further using a combination of the most detailed subject descriptions available and the courses titles.

‘Other’ subjects allied to medicine

63. Twenty per cent of entrants to ‘subjects allied to medicine’ were recorded as studying ‘nursing’ while 74 per cent are recorded as ‘other’. The detailed subject breakdown of these ‘other’ students is shown in Table 7a.

Table 7a Entrant numbers to ‘other’ subjects allied to medicine

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Subject	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full – time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Complementary Medicine ^a	115	12%	30	4%	140	9%	80%
Nutrition	0	0%	135	19%	135	8%	0%
Ophthalmics	40	4%	90	12%	125	8%	31%
Medical Technology	70	7%	95	13%	160	10%	42%
Social Care ^b	410	45%	130	18%	540	33%	76%
Unspecific	290	32%	240	34%	535	33%	55%
Other subjects allied to medicine	920	100%	720	100%	1,640	100%	56%

Table 7a notes

- a. Includes two courses returned as ‘unspecific other subject allied to medicine’, which were identified through course title.
- b. Returned as ‘unspecific other subject allied to medicine’ and identified through course title.

64. The medical technology courses mostly relate to radiography, but also to dentistry. Those without any detailed specific subject include a large number with courses titles indicating they are concerned with social care. The remaining programmes without a specific subject have course titles which suggest they are concerned with areas such as ‘Health Studies’, ‘Social Welfare’, ‘Counselling’ and ‘Sports Therapy’.

Agriculture and related subjects

Even the most detailed subject breakdown available does not fully describe what is covered by ‘agriculture and related subjects’. The course titles can give us some indication, as shown in Table 7b.

Table 7b **Entrant numbers to agriculture by programme title group**
(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Programme title group	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full – time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Equine studies, science, sports and management	220	18%	55	15%	280	17%	79%
Animal (not equine) welfare, science and management. Veterinary nursing	385	31%	100	26%	485	29%	79%
Conservation. Environment, countryside and heritage management	165	13%	70	18%	235	14%	70%
Horticulture, forestry, sports turf management	190	15%	100	26%	290	18%	66%
Wine and food production, safety and management	125	10%	30	7%	155	9%	81%
Land management, agriculture	165	13%	35	8%	195	12%	83%
All agriculture and related subjects	1,255	100%	390	100%	1,645	100%	76%

65. A given course would not necessarily cover all the topics in the programme group description and many courses appear to be highly specialised. So, for example, programmes in the horticulture group include programmes with titles such as ‘Garden Design’, ‘Forestry and Woodland Management’ and ‘Golf Course Management’.

Sociology, social policy, anthropology

66. The understanding of this group of subjects is not helped by further subject breakdowns. No courses are returned under ‘anthropology’, but courses with similar titles are returned under ‘sociology’ and ‘social policy’. These subjects illustrate the limitations of an academic subject classification in classifying foundation degrees. The course titles can give us some indication, as shown in Table 7c.

Table 7c **Entrant numbers to sociology and social policy by programme title group**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Programme title group	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full – time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Policing and criminology	350	68%	40	17%	390	51%	90%
Public services	70	14%	20	9%	90	12%	76%
Other	95	18%	185	74%	275	36%	34%
All sociology and social policy	515	100%	245	100%	760	100%	68%

67. Under 'other' there are some programmes which look as if they could have been returned under subjects allied to medicine or education. These include courses in holistic and complementary therapies and early childhood care.

Social work

68. As already noted, there were 1,485 entrants to 'social work' programmes and these accounted for 62 per cent of the entrants to social studies. The course titles indicate that at least 40 per cent of the students on these programmes are studying topics related to youth work. Most of the remainder are on programmes in health and social care or education and care for young children, showing some overlap with programmes returned under sociology and social policy as well as subjects allied to medicine and education.

Design studies

69. Half of the 'creative arts and design' entrants were studying 'art and design'. Of these 1,995 'art and design' entrants, only 13 per cent were on programmes described as 'fine art'. The remaining 1,765 entrants joined programmes in design studies. Some of these programmes have course titles that indicate particular specialist interests, such as 'Theatre Lighting Design and Practice', whilst others seem more general.

Education studies

70. Eighty-eight per cent of those included under 'education' were registered for 'education studies'. Table 7d shows how these entrants were distributed across groups of programme titles.

Table 7d **Entrant numbers to education studies by programme title group**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Programme title group	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full – time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Early years and early childhood studies	850	59%	1440	50%	2,290	53%	37%
Teaching assistant and teaching support	200	14%	1020	35%	1,220	28%	17%
Other and unspecified	380	27%	415	14%	800	19%	48%
All education studies	1,430	100%	2880	100%	4,310	100%	33%

71. The course titles indicate that about half these entrants were starting ‘Early Years’ foundation degrees¹¹. Many, probably most, of these programmes lead to a level of professional practice known as ‘senior practitioner’ for those working with pre-school children and as teaching assistant in the first years of school. Most of the other courses are designed for teaching assistants.

72. Some of the remaining courses described as ‘other or unspecified’ may also be designed for those qualifying as a senior practitioner or other positions as teaching assistants but some relate to quite different areas like sports coaching and the development of e-learning.

Expected course length

73. Table 8 shows the expected course lengths for foundation degree programmes. Note that individual students will not necessarily take this time to complete the course. Some, through prior learning, may be able to start part way through a course, while others may need to repeat a year.

74. As was found for 2004-05, for full-time study the most frequent expected course length for entrants was two years, while for part-time entrants it was three years. Ninety-two per cent of full-time students were on programmes of two years or shorter, while 70 per cent of part-time students were on programmes of three years or shorter, with 27 per cent on programmes of two years or shorter.

75. There was an overall decrease increase in the numbers returned on very short, that is one-year, courses, though the number studying part-time on two year courses increased by 26 per cent. The progression rates for part-time two-year courses suggest that two years is

¹¹ More information about ‘Early Years’ foundation degrees can be found at: www.surestart.gov.uk/improvingquality/qualifications/earlyyearsfoundationdegree

too short for most part-time students to complete the course. It is therefore important that before starting or expanding such 'fast track' part-time provision, institutions should ensure that the programme is not too compressed, or at least that entrants appreciate that it is likely to take them longer than the 'expected' course length to qualify.

Table 8 Entrant numbers by expected course length

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Course length (years)	Full-time		Part-time	
	Number	%	Number	%
1	510	3%	320	3%
2	14,955	89%	2,440	24%
3	950	6%	4,400	43%
4 or more	80	0%	1,940	19%
Indefinite	245	1%	1,100	11%
Total	16,740	100%	10,200	100%

Distance learning and distance to study location

76. Table 9 below shows the numbers of entrants whose main form of study was distance learning. Note that all these students are on part-time programmes; there was only a very small number of entrants returned as studying full-time by distance learning.

Table 9 Distance learning

(Home foundation degree part-time entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

	Institution type	Number	%
Distance learning	HEI (not OU)	700	7%
	Open University	800	8%
	FEC	110	1%
	All distance learning entrants	1,605	16%
Other part-time entrants		8,595	84%
Total part-time entrants		10,200	100%

77. Table 10 shows the approximate road distances between students' homes at the time of application and the place of study. The distances are very similar to those found for 2004-05 entrants.

78. The main difference is between distance and campus learning, with a median distance for distance learning of over 100 miles. (NB we have not included the Open University because we do not hold data on the location of Open University study centres.)

Table 10 **Distance to study location**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs [not OU] and FECs in England)

Mode and study location	Institution type	Distance (miles)		
		Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
Part-time (distance learning)	HEI (not OU)	64	106	178
	FEC	62	114	176
Part-time (campus learning)	HEI (not OU)	5	12	32
	FEC	3	7	16
Full-time (campus learning)	HEI (not OU)	5	14	35
	FEC	3	7	16

Table 10 notes

- a. Distances are based on data with known postcodes, 96 per cent of records.
- b. Distances are approximate road distances.
- c. Institution refers to the institution that the student is registered with.
- d. Distances are to campus where the student is actually taught, not the administrative centre.
- e. Numbers of part-time distance learners from FECs were insufficient to provide reliable distances.

79. Table 10 also shows that students registered on campus-based programmes at HEIs on average travelled further than students registered at FECs, though many students registered at HEIs are taught at FECs under franchise arrangements (see Table 4). There is little difference in the distance profiles between students on full- and part-time programmes.

Student attributes

Introduction

80. In this section we present the attributes of students on foundation degree programmes. The statistics in this section relate to the academic year 2005-05 and are based on HESA and LSC individualised student records. The statistics relate to all foundation degree students entering in 2005-06. The attributes described are:

- domicile
- sex, age, ethnicity and disability
- socio-economic and educational background
- prior qualifications
- previous experience of higher education.

Apart from Table 11 showing domicile, all the tables refer to home entrants.

Domicile

81. Table 11 shows the numbers of entrants by domicile. Home, that is UK domiciled students, account for 95 per cent of the entrants. Ninety-eight per cent of the home entrants were from England, and the distribution of these entrants across the English regions follows the distribution in the location of study (see Table 5). These proportions are very similar to those reported for entrants in 2004-05.

Table 11 **Entrant numbers by domicile**

(Foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Domicile	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
UK	16,740	95%	10,200	98%	26,940	96%	62%
EU (not UK)	310	2%	120	1%	430	2%	72%
Overseas (not EU)	555	3%	95	1%	650	2%	86%
Total	17,605	100%	10,415	100%	28,020	100%	63%

Sex and age

82. Table 12 below shows that 57 per cent of entrants were female. This and the proportions of female entrants for full- and part-time provision are very similar to those reported for 2004-05.

Table 12 **Entrant numbers by sex**

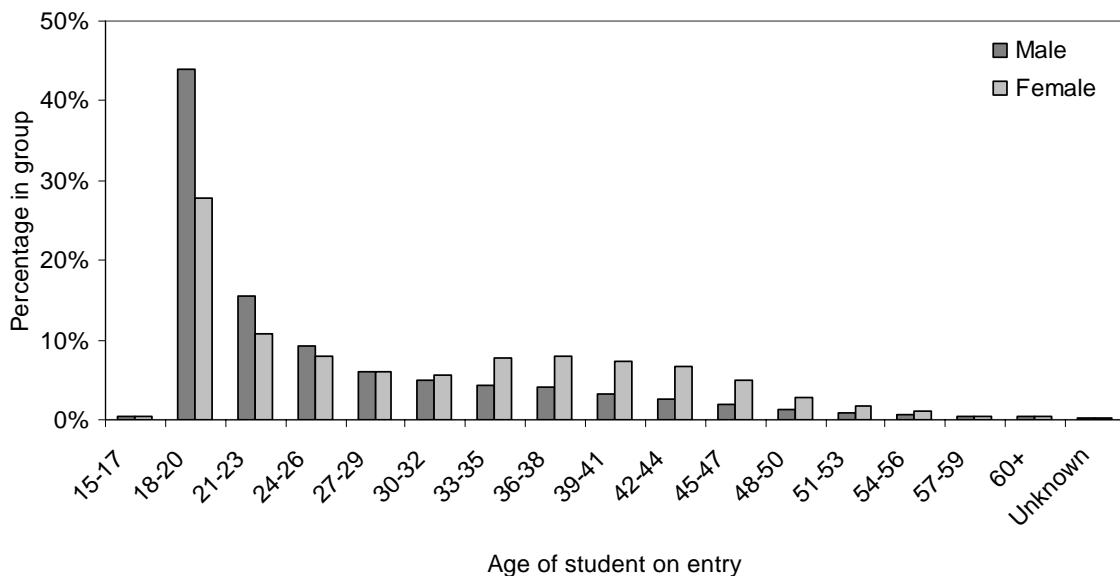
(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Sex	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Male	8,210	49%	3,500	34%	11,710	43%	70%
Female	8,530	51%	6,705	66%	15,230	57%	56%
Total	16,740	100%	10,200	100%	26,940	100%	62%

83. Figure 1 shows the age profile for male and female entrants.

Figure 1 **Proportions of entrants by age for men and women**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)



84. Figure 1 shows a very similar profile to that reported for 2004-05, with the highest proportion of entrants for both men and women for the young (aged 18 to 20) cohort, but with a second mode for women which for 2005-06 entrants occurred within the 36 to 38 age group. (For 2004-05 the second mode was at 39-41, but the proportions for the mid to late thirties and early forties are very similar.) Overall 65 per cent of entrants were aged 21 or over.

85. Table 13 shows the distribution of male and female, young and mature entrants across full-time and part-time study.

Table 13 **Entrant numbers by sex and age at commencement of study**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Age group and sex	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Young male	4,645	28%	570	6%	5,215	19%	89%
Young female	3,880	23%	425	4%	4,305	16%	90%
Mature male	3,560	21%	2,915	29%	6,470	24%	55%
Mature female	4,640	28%	6,260	62%	10,900	41%	43%
Total (known age)	16,725	100%	10,170	100%	26,895	100%	62%
Unknown age	5		10		20		37%
Total	10		20		30		32%

Table 13 note

'Young' students are under 21 on the date of entry to the programme.

86. The distribution of students characterised by age and sex across full- and part-time study is very similar to that reported for 2004-05.

Ethnicity

87. The number of entrants from different ethnic groups is shown in Table 14. The profiles for both full- and part-time provision are very similar to that reported for 2004-05.

Table 14 **Entrant numbers by ethnicity**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Ethnicity	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	140	1%	35	0%	175	1%	80%
Asian/Asian British – Indian	490	3%	170	2%	660	3%	75%
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	415	3%	135	1%	550	2%	75%
Chinese	125	1%	20	0%	145	1%	87%
Other Asian background	150	1%	55	1%	210	1%	73%
Black/Black British – African	545	3%	190	2%	735	3%	74%
Black/Black British – Caribbean	385	2%	210	2%	595	2%	65%
Other Black background	85	1%	40	0%	125	0%	69%
White	13,070	81%	8,355	89%	21,425	84%	61%
Other ethnic background	685	4%	185	2%	875	3%	79%
Total known	16,100	100%	9,395	100%	25,500	100%	63%
Not known	640		805		1,440		44%
Total	16,740		10,200		26,940		62%

Disability

88. The proportions of students with a reported disability are shown in Table 15 below. These are similar to those reported for 2004-05.

Table 15 **Entrant numbers with and without recorded disability**

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Disability	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
With disabled student allowance	420	2%	70	1%	490	2%	86%
With disability not with disabled student allowance	1,225	7%	460	5%	1,685	6%	73%
Without a recorded disability	15,095	90%	9,670	95%	24,765	92%	61%
Total	16,740	100%	10,200	100%	26,940	100%	62%

Socio-economic and educational background

89. The measures of the socio-economic and educational background of students are based on those used in the performance indicators published by HESA¹². For young full-time entrants to HEIs, these are school type, social class¹³ and neighbourhood type¹⁴. For mature students there are no measures of background but we can show the proportion of students coming from low participation neighbourhoods. This measure is also used for the small numbers of young part-time entrants. In addition we present the area-based measures for entrants to FECs, which are not currently published with the performance indicators.

90. Table 16 shows higher proportions of entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) entering FECs compared to HEIs. As found previously, the proportions from LPNs are higher for students registered at FECs.

91. The proportions of mature entrants from LPNs are best considered as a different statistic from those for young entrants. Not only are there minor definitional differences (see Table 16 notes) but while the address at time of application can give an indication of the background for young entrants, the same cannot be assumed for those who enter HE later.

¹² The performance indicator publications are at: www.hesa.ac.uk/pi/home.htm

¹³ Social class categories follow the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) based on the occupation of the highest paid parent or guardian.

¹⁴ Low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) are identified when the students' postcodes are linked to a geodemographic group with young participation rates less than two-thirds the national average.

Table 16 Entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs)
(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Institution Type	Age group	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
		Number entrants	% from LPN	Number entrants	% from LPN	Number entrants	% from LPN
FEC	Young	2,065	27%	205	21%	2,275	26%
	Mature	1,765	22%	1,605	23%	3,370	23%
HEI	Young	5,805	16%	700	18%	6,505	16%
	Mature	5,655	16%	6,455	16%	12,110	16%
Unknowns			1,445		1,235		2,680
Total			16,740		10,200		26,940

Table 16 notes

- Institution type refers to the institution the student is registered with.
- 'Unknowns' includes those with unknown postcode or date of birth.
- 'Mature' refers to students 21 and over at the commencement of their course. This is consistent with the other tables in this report but differs slightly from the definition used in the performance indicators.

92. For young full-time foundation degree entrants at HEIs, who represent 22 per cent of all foundation degree entrants, we have two further statistics: socio-economic group and school or college type. These are shown in Tables 17 and 18.

93. The proportions of entrants from NS-SEC groups 4 to 7 increased from 38 per cent in 2004-05 to 42 per cent in 2005-06. The percentage from state schools and colleges has remained at 96 per cent. So for two of the three measures available for young full-time entrants (school type and low participation neighbourhoods) the proportions have remained stable while the proportions from lower NS-SEC groups have increased. Given the large proportion of unknowns, we have to be cautious in interpreting this apparent change.

Table 17 Entrant numbers from NS-SEC classes 4 to 7

(Home young foundation degree full-time entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs in England)

	Number entrants	% from NS-SEC classes 4 to 7
Known NS-SEC	3,000	42%
Unknown NS-SEC	2,995	-
Total	5,995	-

Table 18 Entrant numbers from state schools and colleges

(Home young foundation degree full-time entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs in England)

	Number entrants	% from state schools and colleges
Known school or college type	3,715	96%
Unknown school or college type	2,280	
Total	5,995	

Prior qualifications

94. Table 19 shows the highest prior qualifications of entrants to foundation degree programmes. Note that these are not necessarily the qualifications for entry.

95. The numbers of entrants with A-levels is uncertain. Under the heading 'A-levels', we have included only those entrants with a data record that enables us to identify them as having at least one A-level, AS-level or one of the Scottish equivalents. Under the heading 'A-level or equivalent' we count those student records where it is unclear whether the entrant has A-levels (or AS or Scottish equivalents) or not. For these records the data is insufficient to distinguish between these and a wide range of other qualifications, including National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at Level 3. Overall, therefore, between 11 per cent and 33 per cent of entrants will have an A-level 'type' highest qualification on entry. Though we cannot be certain, our view is that the higher figure of 33 per cent is probably closer to the actual percentage. Similarly, there is uncertainty about the numbers of entrants with Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) qualifications. The numbers reported as 'VCE only' represent the minimum numbers of entrants with these qualifications and without A-levels.

96. The profile of entrants by prior qualification is broadly similar to that found for 2004-05, though with some specific differences. Against the trend of increasing numbers, the numbers of both full- and part-time entrants recorded as entering through the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) has declined. It is not clear whether this is a real decline, or whether students actually accepted because of their experience have been returned with a qualification below level 3 (that is GCSE, 'other' or 'no formal qualifications'). For those with level 3 qualifications and higher, the largest proportional growth has been for entrants with BTEC qualifications. This is not surprising given the growth in numbers of students qualifying with these awards (HEFCE 2007e).

Table 19 Entrant numbers by prior qualification

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Qualification at entry	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
HE	2,070	12%	2,495	24%	4,565	17%	45%
A-levels	2,800	17%	250	2%	3,055	11%	92%
A-level or equivalent	3,560	21%	2,305	23%	5,860	22%	61%
VCE only	465	3%	20	0%	485	2%	96%
BTEC Level 3	2,240	13%	600	6%	2,845	11%	79%
Access to HE course	320	2%	125	1%	445	2%	72%
GCSE	885	5%	930	9%	1,815	7%	49%
Other qualifications	1,395	8%	650	6%	2,045	8%	68%
APEL	560	3%	820	8%	1,375	5%	41%
No formal qualification	165	1%	95	1%	260	1%	63%
Unknown	2,280	14%	1,910	19%	4,195	16%	54%
Total	16,740	100%	10,200	100%	26,940	100%	62%

Table 19 notes

- a. HE: all HE qualifications or HE institutional credits. Further breakdown at Table 21.
- b. A-levels: A-level, AS level, or Scottish equivalents. A-level tariff returned.
- c. A-level or equivalent: Level 3 qualification(s) including A-level, AS-levels, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), VCEs, Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCEs), NVQs, and Scottish equivalents. Entrants may have any one or more of these qualifications in any combination. A-level tariff not returned.
- d. VCE only: Vocational Certificate of Education. Also variously referred to as AVCEs, vocational A-levels or GNVQs, which they replaced. Evidence implies entrants do not have A-levels. VCE tariff returned and no A-level tariff returned.
- e. BTEC Level 3: BTEC National Award, Certificate or Diploma or earlier Ordinary National Certificate or Diploma (ONC or OND) awards.
- f. Access to HE Course: designed for mature entrants, usually one-year full-time study.
- g. GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) also includes earlier O-levels and Scottish equivalents.
- h. APEL: Accreditation of prior experiential learning.

97. As noted previously, the differences between the profiles of entry qualifications for full- and part-time entrants can be understood in terms of the ages of the entrants. Table 20 shows the entry qualification profiles for young and mature entrants.

Table 20 Entrant numbers by prior qualification group and age

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

	Entry qualifications	Full-time		Part-time	
		Number	%	Number	%
Young	HE	485	6%	65	7%
	A-levels/Highers or equivalent	4,215	49%	390	39%
	Other	2,805	33%	335	34%
	Unknown	1,015	12%	210	21%
	Total young	8,525	100%	1,000	100%
Mature	HE	1,585	19%	2,420	26%
	A-levels/Highers or equivalent	2,140	26%	2,160	24%
	Other	3,220	39%	2,895	32%
	Unknown	1,255	15%	1,690	18%
	Total mature	8,200	100%	9,170	100%
	Unknown age	15		30	
	Total all ages	16,740		10,200	

Previous experience of higher education

98. Table 19 showed that 17 per cent of entrants had an HE qualification. Table 21 provides a breakdown of these qualifications. In addition, we have included the entrants that previously studied on a programme leading to an HE award or institutional credit, but who did not gain the HE qualification or institutional credit, or at least it has not been recorded. Seventy-two per cent of full-time students and 52 per cent of part-time students are 'initial' entrants; that is, they have no previous experience of higher education. The proportion of initial entrants to part-time study represents a decline from the 60 per cent reported for 2004-05.

Table 21 Entrant numbers by previous experience of higher education

(Home foundation degree entrants in 2005-06 at HEIs and FECs in England)

Previous HE qualification or experience	Full-time		Part-time		Total		% full-time
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Postgraduate (ex. PGCE)	110	1%	185	2%	295	1%	38%
First degree (inc. PGCE)	475	3%	510	5%	985	4%	48%
HND /HNC	570	3%	665	7%	1,235	5%	46%
Professional qualification or higher NVQ	230	1%	440	4%	670	2%	35%
Institutional credits	145	1%	180	2%	325	1%	45%
Other HE qualifications	535	3%	515	5%	1,050	4%	51%
Some previous HE experience	2,700	16%	2,370	23%	5,070	19%	53%
New to HE	11,970	72%	5,335	52%	17,305	64%	69%
Total	16,740	100%	10,200	100%	26,940	100%	62%

Table 21 note

PGCE: Postgraduate Certificate in Education

99. Despite this decline in the proportion of initial entrants, the contribution to the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) by foundation degree entrants increased from 1.3 per cent in 2004-05 to 1.8 per cent in 2005-06. The provisional value of the HEIPR for 2005-06 was 42.8 per cent (DfES 2007).

Student feedback on the quality of programmes

100. Here we report the feedback of students on foundation degree programmes as obtained through the National Student Survey (NSS)¹⁵. The survey seeks responses to 22 questions. Twenty-one questions are grouped into five sections or scales, with the final question giving an indication of overall satisfaction. The NSS survey currently only includes students registered at HEIs¹⁶.

101. Students are surveyed in what is expected to be their final year or, for flexible programmes, after a significant period of study. For the most recent survey, conducted in January 2007, it would typically include full-time students who started in the 2005-06 academic year and part-time students who started in 2004-05. Table 22 below provides a breakdown of the students included in, and those responding to, the 2007 survey.

Table 22 **2007 NSS response rates**

(Home foundation degree students at HEIs in England)

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Target population	9,785	3,065	12,850
Respondents	4,705	1,520	6,230
Response rate	48.1%	49.7%	48.5%

102. The responses from students on foundation degree courses, as for students on other programmes, were generally positive. Table 23 shows the profile of responses to the statement, 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my course'.

103. Seventy-six per cent of the respondents expressed satisfaction with their course. This response is summarised in two other ways. The 'net agreement' statistic is the sum of the percentages of those who agree and definitely agree, less the percentages of those who disagree and definitely disagree. If this statistic is positive, the average net response is positive. The 'mean response score' is calculated by assigning values of 1 to 5 from 'definitely disagree' to 'definitely agree' and taking the mean. Values greater than 3.00 indicate an average positive response.

104. Overall satisfaction, as reflected in all three measures, is very similar to that reported previously for 2006. We also see, as found previously, that students on part-time programmes on average report higher levels of satisfaction than those on full-time programmes.

¹⁵ Information on the NSS is available at: www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/nss/

¹⁶ Students registered at an HEI and taught at a FEC under a franchised arrangement are included in the NSS.

Table 23 Responses to 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course'

(Home foundation degree students at HEIs in England, 2007 NSS)

Response	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 Definitely disagree	230	5%	55	4%	290	5%
2 Disagree	395	8%	115	8%	510	8%
3 Neither agree nor disagree	530	11%	150	10%	680	11%
4 Agree	2,205	47%	695	46%	2,900	47%
5 Definitely agree	1,345	29%	500	33%	1,845	30%
Total respondents to question	4,705	100%	1,520	100%	6,225	100%
'Not applicable' or no answer	5		0		5	
All respondents	4,705		1,520		6,230	
Agreeing or definitely agreeing	75%		79%		76%	
Net agreement	62%		68%		63%	
Mean response score	3.86		3.97		3.88	

105. Previously we noted that, for responses to the question relating to the organisation of the course, students on foundation degree programmes made less positive responses than students on other programmes. We suggested that this was due, at least in part, to teething problems with new programmes. Table 24 shows the responses to the relevant question from the 2007 survey.

Table 24 Responses to 'the course is well organised and is running smoothly'

(Home foundation degree students at HEIs in England, 2007 NSS)

Response	Full-time		Part-time		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1 Definitely disagree	515	11%	120	8%	635	10%
2 Disagree	740	16%	195	13%	935	15%
3 Neither agree nor disagree	905	19%	265	17%	1170	19%
4 Agree	1,785	38%	640	42%	2,420	39%
5 Definitely agree	755	16%	295	19%	1050	17%
Total respondents to question	4,695	100%	1,520	100%	6,210	100%
'Not applicable' or no answer	15	-	5	-	15	-
All respondents	4,705	-	1,520	-	6,230	-
Agreeing or definitely agreeing	54%		62%		56%	
Net agreement	27%		41%		31%	
Mean response score	3.32		3.52		3.37	

106. On all the measures of agreement, there is an improvement from what was previously reported in the 2006 survey. This is what we would expect if the reason for the low levels of agreement were due to teething problems.

107. Some support for this explanation for the improvement is provided by Table 25, which shows how the net agreement and mean response scores vary in relation to when the course was established for full-time students.

Table 25 Responses to ‘the course is well organised and is running smoothly’ for new and established courses

(Home full-time foundation degree students at HEIs in England, 2007 NSS)

Cohorts	Number of respondents to question	% agreeing or definitely agreeing	Net agreement	Mean response score
New FD course (No previous HND)	440	50%	23%	3.31
New FD course (Previously HND)	410	63%	43%	3.55
One year of prior FD provision	1,130	49%	16%	3.16
At least two years prior FD provision	2,730	55%	30%	3.36
All FD courses	4,705	54%	27%	3.32

Table 25 note

FD: Foundation degree

108. We see that that the majority of respondents started on programmes that were established two or more years before they started. These have higher levels of agreement than the newer programmes though not, in this survey, than those that had developed from HND programmes. However, this may not be the whole story, because the lowest level of agreement is found for those programmes where there was just one year of FD provision. Many of these programmes will have been the new FD programmes in 2006 and it may be, as we suggested previously, that these programmes had difficulties with organisation that were more to do with the programmes themselves, rather than because they were new.

109. Though, for whatever reasons, foundation degree students have responded more positively to this question than in previous years, the level of agreement still suggests that there remain some problems. Many of the students’ comments draw attention to examples of poor organisation and, as noted previously, these can have a greater impact on mature students who often have to juggle their time between competing demands. Some of the comments suggested that this may have been caused by the complications of franchise arrangements, though an analysis of responses did not show less positive results for students taught under franchise arrangements after taking into account how long the course had been established.

Progression through foundation degree programmes

Introduction

110. In this section we present the rates of progression and qualification among students on foundation degree programmes. The statistics are based on HESA and LSC individualised student records. Data from 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 were linked together to form a longitudinal record. Progression statistics are then derived for those entering in 2003-04 and 2004-05.

111. Two sets of statistics are presented:

- rates and nature of progression from year of entry and
- rates of qualifying.

112. For the progression from the year of entry statistics we show rates for students registered at both HEIs and FECs, but because data on qualifications within the ILR are incomplete, qualification rates are only provided for students registered at HEIs.

113. In order to provide straightforward and interpretable results we have selected only programmes which follow a standard academic year and have a course length of two or three years.

Rate of progression from year of entry 2004-05

114. Table 26 shows the rate of progression for those students who entered in academic year 2004-05 and whose courses follow a standard academic year. Rates for students registered at FECs and HEIs are shown separately.

115. For those students continuing with foundation degree studies, Table 26 shows whether they are progressing, typically from year one to two of the programme, or repeating, and whether they have changed institution.

116. The patterns of progression are very similar to those reported for 2003-04 entrants. Generally, there is a slight increase in the percentage of entrants continuing with foundation degree and HE study, but the percentage continuing and progressing shows a slight decline with increasing percentages of students repeating the first year of their programme.

Table 26 Progression from year of entry

(Home foundation degree students on standard academic years at FECs and HEIs in England who entered in 2004-05)

Institution type	Study towards (or award) in 2004-05	Full-time		Part-time	
		No.	%	No.	%
FECs	FD progress – same institution	1,530	48%	640	39%
	FD repeat – same institution	460	15%	335	21%
	FD progress – new institution	80	3%	20	1%
	FD repeat – new institution	40	1%	5	0%
	Any FD study	2,110	67%	1,000	61%
	Change to honours or higher	200	6%	50	3%
	Change to other HE course	35	1%	30	2%
	Any HE study	2,345	74%	1,080	66%
	Change to FE level course	75	2%	85	5%
	Not studying	750	24%	475	29%
	All FEC entrants	3,170	100%	1,635	100%
HEIs	FD progress – same institution	5,600	67%	2,670	63%
	FD repeat – same institution	1,085	13%	620	15%
	FD progress – new institution	10	0%	20	0%
	FD repeat – new institution	15	0%	10	0%
	Any FD study	6,715	80%	3,315	79%
	Change to honours or higher	535	6%	100	2%
	Change to other HE course	80	1%	50	1%
	Any HE study	7,330	87%	3,470	82%
	Change to FE level course	120	1%	110	3%
	Not studying	950	11%	630	15%
	All HEI entrants	8,405	100%	4,210	100%

Table 26 notes

- Institution type refers to the institution the student is registered with.
- 'Progress' means that the year of programme of study has increased, or a foundation degree or higher qualification has been awarded, or both.
- 'Repeat' means the students studied the same year of programme in 2004-05 as in 2003-04.
- Study at foundation degree level in 2003-04 refers to students registered at HEIs and FECs in England. Study in the following year (2004-05) includes students registered for any FE or HE study in HEIs in the UK and students registered for any FE or HE study in FECs in England. Any study outside this coverage is not included and the students will be categorised as 'not studying'.
- 'Standard academic year' refers to students starting between 1 August 2003 and 31 December 2003 and shown as completing their year of study before 31 July 2004.

Changing mode of study

117. Students will not necessarily follow the same mode of study throughout the whole programme. Table 27 shows, for those students who continued studying on a foundation degree programme through 2004-05 and 2005-06, the numbers who changed from full- to part-time study and vice versa.

Table 27 **Changing mode of study**

(Home foundation degree students on standard academic years at FECs and HEIs in England studying at the same institution in 2004-05 and 2005-06)

Mode in year of entry (2003-04)	Mode in second year of study (2004-05)	No.	%
FT	PT progress	129	1%
FT	PT repeat	90	1%
FT	PT progress or repeat	219	3%
FT	FT or PT	8,678	100%
PT	FT progress	185	4%
PT	FT repeat	45	1%
PT	FT progress or repeat	230	5%
PT	FT or PT	4,265	100%

Table 27 note

The students included in this table are the same as those included in Table 26 and shown as studying for a foundation degree in the same institution in 2004-05 as in their year of entry, 2003-04.

118. As reported for 2003-04 and 2004-05, most students do not change their mode of study. However, the patterns of change for 2004-05 and 2005-06 are quite different. The proportion changing from part-time to full-time has increased from 3 per cent to 5 per cent, while the proportion changing from full-time to part-time has decreased from 14 per cent to just 3 per cent.

119. Whether these changes are real, or whether they simply reflect differences in reporting, is not clear. For programmes that include a large proportion of work-based learning, the distinction between full- and part-time study may not be clear.

Rate of qualifying

120. Table 28 shows the qualification rates for students completing two- and three-year programmes within the expected course length.

121. We have only been able to calculate qualification rates for students registered at HEIs. In order to calculate rates for students on two-year programmes, we have to go back to at least the cohort that entered in 2004-05, while for three-year programmes we have to go back to 2003-04. (The progression rates for the 2003-04 entrants are similar to those for the 2004-05 entrants shown in Table 26 and are tabulated at Annex B.)

122. Given the short time period available, we have had to focus on the 'HE qualification rate within the expected course length'. This is a very exacting measure since students who repeat a year or take a year out will not be included. The statistics in Table 28 should not be compared with the completion rates published as part of the UK HE performance indicators, which are based on projections of what the qualification rate would be after 15 years.

123. The qualification rates are slightly higher than the corresponding figures for one year earlier, with the exception of students studying full-time on three-year programmes. For such students starting in 2002-03, 66 per cent had qualified by 2004-05, while for students starting in 2003-04 only 49 per cent had qualified by 2005-06. However, the number of these entrants was only 180 in 2002-03, and it may be that they were untypical in some way.

124. Though higher than in the previous year, the qualification rates of part-time students on two year programmes within the expected course length remains low, at just 23 per cent with a foundation degree and 27 per cent with some HE qualification¹⁷.

¹⁷ Foundation Degree Forward has looked at what happens 'on the ground' for some of these intense two year part-time courses. In one case they found that work-based learning was a major component of the course, with only one or two days a month contact time with the HEI. The students' progress at a pace that suits their workplace commitments and are able to dip in and out of the course as the university runs four cohorts per year with different starts times. Students complete the course as and when it suits them and their employer. Thus the two years is, in effect, a minimum course length. It may be better thought of as a flexible course length.

Table 28 **Qualification rates within expected course length**

(Home foundation degree students who were expected to qualify in 2005-06 on standard academic year two- and three-year programmes at HEIs in England)

Two-year expected course length				
Outcome by 2005-06	Full-time		Part-time	
	No.	% in 2 years	No.	% in 2 years
FD awarded – same institution	3,415	44%	270	26%
FD awarded – new institution	575	7%	50	5%
FD qualification rate	3,990	51%	320	31%
Honours degree or higher awarded	20	0%	-	0%
Other HE award	305	4%	25	2%
HE qualification rate	4,315	56%	350	33%
Studying – FD or higher	1,705	22%	375	36%
Studying – other HE	55	1%	10	1%
Not studying at HE level	1,670	22%	310	30%
All 2004-05 two-year entrants	7,750	100%	1,045	100%

Three-year expected course length				
Outcome by 2005-06	Full-time		Part-time	
	No.	% in 3 years	No.	% in 3 years
FD awarded – same institution	340	44%	615	46%
FD awarded – new institution	-	0%	15	1%
FD qualification rate	340	44%	635	47%
Honours degree or higher awarded	20	2%	10	1%
Other HE award	20	3%	40	3%
HE qualification rate	380	49%	680	51%
Studying – FD or higher	190	25%	355	27%
Studying – other HE	5	1%	15	1%
Not studying at HE level	195	25%	285	21%
All 2003-04 three year entrants	770	100%	1,335	100%

125. Table 29 shows the qualification rates for 2003-04 entrants to two year programmes after two and three years. When we compare these qualification rates with those reported previously for entrants in 2002-03, we find that the qualification rate for students on full-time programmes has increased, while the qualification rate for those on part-time programmes has decreased.

126. Those on part-time two-year programmes see the greatest increase in completion between two and three years, but even after three years the completion rate is still relatively low, with less than half receiving any HE qualification.

127. After three years of study, there were still large numbers studying on foundation degree courses. If half of those still studying at HE level qualify, the eventual HE qualification rates would be 71 per cent and 62 per cent for full-time and part-time students, respectively.

Table 29 **Qualification rates within one year after expected course length**

(Home foundation degree students who entered in 2003-04 on standard academic year two-year programmes at HEIs in England)

Outcome by 2005-06	Full-time		Part-time	
	% in 2 years	% in 3 years	% in 2 years	% in 3 years
FD awarded – same institution	48%	53%	23%	39%
FD awarded – new institution	0%	0%	0%	0%
FD qualification rate	48%	54%	23%	40%
Honours degree or higher awarded	0%	4%	0%	3%
Other HE award	2%	3%	4%	4%
HE qualification rate	50%	60%	27%	46%
Studying – FD or higher	25%	20%	47%	32%
Studying – other HE	1%	1%	1%	1%
Not studying at HE level	23%	18%	24%	21%
All 2003-04 two year entrants	(4,740)	100%	(1,360)	100%

Progression from foundation to honours degree programmes

128. Foundation degrees are intended to provide 'smooth progression' to honours degree programmes, sometimes involving participation in a summer school and then one year of further full-time study, or the part-time equivalent. In this section the analysis is based on all those students who qualified with foundation degrees at HEIs in 2004-05, whenever they started. Note that, as we have seen in the analysis of progression through foundation degree programmes, some students qualify with an honours degree without being reported as gaining a foundation degree. These qualifiers are excluded from the analysis presented here. As with the qualification rate statistics, this analysis is limited to students registered at HEIs.

129. Table 30 shows the numbers of students who graduated in 2003-04 and went on to honours programmes in 2004-05. We can see that about half of the foundation degree qualifiers immediately progressed to an honours programme.

Table 30 **Progression to honours programmes**

(2004-05 foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs)

Honours degree study in 2005-06	No. of FD qualifiers	%
Honours programme registered at same institution	2,260	50%
Honours programme registered at different institution	225	5%
Total on honours programmes	2,485	54%
Not on honours programme	2,080	46%
Total overall	4,565	100%

130. The figures are similar to those previously reported for those qualifying with a foundation degree in 2003-04. Most students progressing to an honours degree do so at the same institution. This pattern may not apply to students qualifying from FECs who are not included in Table 30.

131. We interpret the 'one year of further study' to mean one year of extra study on a typical three-year full-time honours programme. To generalise this we could say that the foundation degree programme was credited with the equivalent of about two years of full-time study on an honours programme, ignoring the summer school provision. In Table 31 below we show the number of full-time years effectively credited to the foundation degree for those studying towards an honours degree.

132. In a small number of cases the honours degree programme did not have a formal year of programme structure and therefore it was not possible to determine the credit that had been assigned to the foundation degree award.

133. For students continuing to register with the same institution, 87 per cent were credited with the full two years of equivalent honours-level study as originally envisaged. This is an increase from 81 per cent previously reported for 2003-04 foundation degree qualifiers.

Table 31 Number of years credited to honours degree programmes

(2004-05 foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs who progressed to honours degree programmes in 2005-06)

Number of years credited	Same institution		Different institution	
	No. of FD qualifiers	%	No. of FD qualifiers	%
2 or more	1,970	87%	135	60%
1	200	9%	50	21%
0	70	3%	30	14%
Undetermined	25	1%	10	5%
Total	2,260	100%	225	100%

134. For students moving to a different institution only 60 per cent were credited with two years of equivalent honours-level provision, lower than the 70 per cent reported for 2003-04 qualifiers. However, the number of qualifiers is small and this fall could be a chance fluctuation.

135. Not all the students credited with two years of study will be expected to graduate within a year. Some, for example, will be on the third year of a four-year honours programme. If we just look at the foundation degree students who progressed to the final year of the honours programme, we can see whether and how they graduated. Table 32 shows the degree outcomes for these students.

136. Twenty-four per cent of the students who progressed to the final year of an honours programme were not reported as graduating. This is a decrease from the 29 per cent previously reported for 2003-04 foundation degree qualifiers. As noted previously, there are a number of possible explanations for students not gaining an award. They may have discontinued or failed to qualify, they may have had to take longer to graduate, or it may be they have qualified in all respects apart from some formality.

Table 32 Honours degree achievement

(2004-05 foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs who progressed to the final year of an honours degree programme in 2005-06)

Degree classification	No.	%
First	150	8%
Upper second	585	32%
Lower second	500	28%
Third	80	4%
Other	45	3%
No award	435	24%
Total	1,795	100%

After qualifying: employment outcomes

Introduction and context

137. This section looks at all those students who qualified with foundation degrees at HEIs in 2005-06, whenever they started. The DLHE survey is the main data source. Like the NSS survey, it is not complete; not all qualifiers respond to the survey. Table 33 shows the response rates for full- and part-time qualifiers.

Table 33 **Response rates to DLHE survey**

(Foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs, 2005-06 DLHE survey)

Response	Full-time		Part-time	
	No.	%	No.	%
Written or online response	790	16%	605	25%
Telephone and other responses	3,110	64%	1,185	49%
Total responses	3,900	81%	1,790	74%
No response	930	19%	640	26%
All FD 2005-06 qualifiers	4,835	100%	2,425	100%

138. Those who do not complete a paper or web questionnaire are contacted by telephone. In the telephone follow-up, some institutions do not ask some of the questions which are of interest to us. Though the numbers of responses to some questions are low, we are not as concerned about response bias as we would be if the respondents were choosing not to answer these questions.

139. In interpreting these results it is important to appreciate that the DLHE survey takes place six months after qualifying. A new survey has been carried out three years after qualifying (HESA 2007) reporting outcomes for students who qualified in 2002-03 and therefore reporting the longer-term outcomes of those students who entered foundation degree programmes in 2001-02 and qualified in two years. The numbers are therefore small, and their experience, as the first foundation degree entrants on pilot programmes, may not be the same as for later cohorts. Results from this survey are shown after presenting the main findings based on the DLHE survey of 2005-06 qualifiers.

Destinations after qualifying

140. Table 34 provides a summary of the destinations reported by the respondents. Overall, for full- and part-time qualifiers, 54 per cent were still studying. This is consistent with the figure of 54 per cent of 2004-05 qualifiers progressing to honours degrees, based on the student record data (see Table 30).

Table 34 **Destinations six months after qualifying**

(Foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs, 2005-06 DLHE survey)

Destination	Full-time		Part-time	
	No.	%	No.	%
Studying (not employed)	1,850	47%	240	13%
Studying and employed	825	21%	685	38%
Employed	1,015	26%	815	45%
Total employed	1,840	47%	1,495	84%
Unemployed	105	3%	35	2%
Other	110	3%	15	1%
Total DLHE respondents	3,900	100%	1,790	100%

Previous work for current employer

141. Table 35 shows the relationship between current and earlier employment for both full- and part-time qualifiers.

Table 35 **Working for current employer before or during foundation degree course**

(Foundation degree home qualifiers in employment registered at English HEIs, six months after qualifying, 2005-06 DLHE survey)

Previous work for current employer	Full-time		Part-time	
	No.	%	No.	%
Before studying only	140	10%	245	20%
During studying only	370	26%	230	19%
Before and during studying	435	30%	545	45%
Total previously employed	950	66%	1,020	85%
Not previously employed	480	34%	185	15%
Total answering question	1,430	100%	1,205	100%
Non response to question	410		295	
Total respondents in employment	1,840		1,495	

142. The pattern shown in Table 35 is similar to that reported previously from the 2004-05 DLHE survey.

Job quality six months after qualifying

143. As noted previously, in interpreting the evidence about the quality of the jobs after qualifying it is important to appreciate that for most foundation degree qualifiers this is continuing employment. For some, especially full-time students, it may be casual work which continues while they search for a job, but for many others the study for a foundation degree is often part of their career development.

144. A summary of three non-salary measures of job quality is presented in Table 36.

Table 36 Job quality six months after qualifying

(Foundation degree home qualifiers in employment registered at English HEIs, 2005-06 DLHE survey)

Type of 'good' job	Full-time		Part-time	
	Number responses	% 'good' jobs	Number responses	% 'good' jobs
'Graduate' job	1,840	48%	1,495	49%
Qualification required, expected or an advantage	1,475	46%	1,225	37%
Positive reasons for taking the job	405	88%	495	94%

Table 36 notes

a. 'Graduate' job.

The categorisation of 'graduate' follows the algorithm devised by Elias and Purcell (2004).

b. Qualification required.

With respect to whether it would be possible to get the job without the foundation degree the following answers were counted:

- no: the qualification was a formal requirement.
- no: successful applicants were expected to have the qualification.
- possibly: but the qualification did give me an advantage.

c. Positive reasons for taking a job.

The following were counted as positive reasons:

- it fitted into my career plan/it was exactly the type of work I wanted.
- it was an opportunity to progress in the organisation.
- to gain experience in order to get the type of job I really want.
- to see if I would like the type of work it involved.
- to broaden my experience/to develop general skills.

d. Respondents without a positive reason would have only given one or more of the following responses:

- it was the best job offer I received/only job offer I received.
- in order to pay off debts.
- in order to earn a living.

145. All those who responded to the survey answered the question used to give the classification 'graduate or non-graduate' job (1,840 full-time, 1,495 part-time). However, not all survey respondents answered the other questions. To a large extent this was because the questions were not asked in the telephone interviews.

146. The results show a similar pattern to that previously reported for the 2004-05 qualifiers, apart from a five percentage point increase in the number of employed qualifiers from full-time study with a 'graduate' job.

Job quality after three and a half years

147. A new survey has been carried out (HESA 2007) reporting outcomes for students who qualified in 2002-03 three and a half years after qualifying. This survey would therefore typically capture the longer-term outcomes of those students who entered foundation degree programmes in 2001-02 and qualified in two years. As the first foundation degree entrants on pilot programmes, their numbers are small and their experience may not be the same as for later cohorts. For these reasons we have to treat the results with caution, but the estimates of the percentages of qualifiers with graduate jobs do give a first indication of the longer-term outcomes of qualifiers from foundation degree programmes¹⁸.

148. All the respondents to the 2002-03 DLHE qualifying with foundation degrees were included in the longitudinal DLHE survey, but only 38 per cent responded. However, the destination profiles six months after qualifying for the respondents and non-respondents to the longitudinal DLHE were similar, as were the proportions of those in employment in graduate jobs. With respect of these key attributes, therefore, the respondents to the longitudinal DLHE seem to be representative. Table 36a shows the destinations of qualifiers after six months and three years and six months.

Table 36a **Destinations six months and three and a half years after qualifying**

(Foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs, 2002-03 DLHE survey, 2007 longitudinal DLHE survey)

Destination	Six months		Three and a half years	
	No.	%	No.	%
Studying (not employed)	95	35%	10	3%
Employed (with and without study)	170	62%	235	87%
Unemployed	5	2%	10	3%
Other	5	1%	15	6%
All respondents	270	100%	270	100%

Table 36a notes

Only qualifiers returned as starting their programme in 2001-02 or later were included. Ninety-five per cent actually started in 2001-02. Qualifiers from full and part-time study taken together. Eighty-five per cent were full-time.

149. The changes in the numbers of qualifiers who were categorised as 'unemployed' or 'other' over the three years between the two surveys are not significant. The main conclusion is that, as we might expect, the numbers of students studying decreased, while the number employed increased.

¹⁸ The other measures of job quality shown in table 36, 'qualification required' and 'positive reasons', had lower response rates, while the questions on the DLHE and longitudinal DLHE were not identical making both estimation and interpretation more difficult. For these reasons no results for these measures are presented.

150. The percentage of qualifiers in employment even after six months is somewhat higher and the percentage studying correspondingly lower than shown in Table 34 for 2005-06 qualifiers. This is in part due to some bias in the responses to the longitudinal DLHE. (If we take all the DLHE respondents we find 56 per cent in employment and 38 per cent studying.) In part it may also be due to the fact that routes to honours degrees were not well developed for this first cohort¹⁹.

151. Table 36b shows the percentage of students in employment with graduate jobs after six months and after three years and six months.

Table 36b Per cent of employed qualifiers with 'graduate' jobs six months and three and a half years after qualifying

(Foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs, 2002-03 DLHE survey, 2007 longitudinal DLHE survey)

Population	Six months		Three and a half years	
	Number 'in employment' responses	% 'graduate' jobs	Number 'in employment' responses	% 'graduate' jobs
Respondents to DLHE	395	39%	-	-
Respondents to DLHE and longitudinal DLHE	170	38%	235	54%

Table 36b notes

Definition of 'graduate' as described in Table 36.

Only qualifiers returned as starting their programme in 2001-02 or later were included.

152. As noted previously, the respondents to the longitudinal DLHE have a similar proportion of 'graduate' jobs at six months. The proportion is significantly lower than for the 2005-06 qualifiers shown in Table 36.

153. For those who responded to the longitudinal survey as well as the DLHE, we see that the percentage of employed qualifiers with 'graduate' jobs increased over the three years between the two surveys. This is the net result of many different possible movements by individual qualifiers between graduate employment, non-graduate employment, unemployment, study and so on. We can summarise these various progression paths by taking those qualifiers who were in the labour market (that is either employed or unemployed) after six months and three years later, and those who were studying after six months and

¹⁹ Progression to articulated honours programmes was identified as an area for development in reviews of foundation degree programmes started in 2002-03 and 2003-04 (QAA 2005).

were in the labour market three years later. Together these two paths account for 89 per cent of the respondents.

Table 36c Per cent of employed and unemployed qualifiers with 'graduate' jobs six months and three and a half years after qualifying

(Foundation degree home qualifiers registered at English HEIs, 2002-03 DLHE survey, 2007 longitudinal DLHE survey)

Employment, study status		Total number (per cent) respondents		% in graduate jobs at six months	% in graduate jobs at three and a half years
Six months	Three and a half years				
Employed or unemployed	Employed or unemployed	165	(61%)	36%	58%
Studying (not employed)	Employed or unemployed	75	(28%)	n/a	41%
Other		30	(11%)	*	*
All respondents		270	(100%)	36%	52%

Table 36c notes

Percentages in graduate jobs refer to percentages of those, and only those, employed or unemployed.

The percentages with graduate jobs for all respondents in Table 36c are slightly lower than in 36b because the Table 36b figures exclude qualifiers who were unemployed.

n/a – 'not applicable'; no qualifiers employed or unemployed by definition.

* – indicates numbers too small to give a meaningful estimate.

154. We can see that the increase in the proportion of those in the labour market with graduate jobs is largely due to those who were in employment after six months.

Salary

155. Table 37 shows the quartile salaries for male and female, full- and part-time qualifiers six months after qualifying. This shows that many of the respondents to the survey did not provide salary information. Again, to some extent this was because the question was not asked in the telephone interviews.

Table 37 **Salary six months after qualifying**

(Foundation degree home qualifiers in employment registered at English HEIs, 2005-06 DLHE survey)

Mode of foundation degree study	Sex	Response		Salary (£ per annum)		
		Number providing salary	Number DLHE responses	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
Full-time	Male	175	620	11,000	15,000	19,000
	Female	405	1,220	10,000	15,000	17,000
	All	580	1,840	11,000	15,000	18,000
Part-time	Male	125	255	18,000	27,000	34,000
	Female	500	1,240	12,000	15,000	20,000
	All	625	1,495	13,000	16,000	24,000
All	Male	300	875	13,000	18,000	26,000
	Female	905	2,460	11,000	15,000	18,000
	All	1,205	3,335	12,000	16,000	20,000

156. As previously found from the 2004-05 survey, the salaries for men and women are similar for qualifiers from full-time study, while for qualifiers from part-time study, men's salaries are significantly higher.

157. As noted previously, the salaries of the part-time time qualifiers to a large extent reflect their employment before and during study. To some extent the differences between men and women in salaries for part-time qualifiers reflects the fact that a most students on foundation degree programmes relating to caring and teaching support roles are women and these are low-paid occupations.

158. The longitudinal DLHE gives some indication of the salaries three and a half years after qualifying. All the caveats given with respect to graduate jobs apply. In addition, the data is further degraded by the fact that less than half the DLHE respondents provided information on salary. The data suggests that the foundation degree qualifiers employed three and a half years after qualifying in 2002-03 have a median salary about 30 per cent higher than the salaries of qualifiers employed after six months.

159. To understand what lies behind we need much more detail about the career paths of the qualifiers. For one group, students on Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree (EYSEFD) programmes we have more detail information (Snape, et al 2007). Students who started their programme in 2003 were surveyed three times up to the late summer of 2006, that is shortly after they were expected to qualify. The feedback over a whole range of questions was positive, but the aspiration 'to increase the chance of a pay rise' was the least well met.

Support from employers

160. This section considers the financial and other support provided by employers for students on foundation degree programmes. The DLHE survey provides information as well as the HESA and ILR student records.

161. For part-time qualifiers the DLHE survey includes questions about the support they received from their employer, if they were employed during or immediately before their study. (Note that this will not necessarily be their current employer.)

Table 38 **Employer support during study**

(Foundation degree part-time home qualifiers registered at English HEIs, 2005-06 DLHE survey)

Source of tuition fee	Number	%
Financial support only	80	20%
Financial and other support	70	16%
Total with financial support	150	36%
Other support only	185	44%
Total with any support	335	80%
No support	65	16%
Without employment during study	15	4%
Total responding to question	420	100%
Question not answered	1,300	
Total DLHE part-time respondents	1,720	

162. Financial support involves the employer paying the fee and, in some cases, giving other financial support such as living expenses. Non-financial support includes study leave and any other help. Thirty-six per cent of the qualifiers reported that their employers gave financial support at least to the extent of paying the fee. Though still a minority of the part-time qualifiers, this is higher than previously found from the 2004-05 DLHE survey. It would be interesting to know whether employer support was particular to particular programmes, in particular subject areas, but given the low response rate to this question and the resulting small number of respondents, such further analysis would be difficult.

163. The student records enable us to report more up-to-date information on fee payment by employers by looking at the most recent entrants. We are also able to report for both full- and part-time students, registered at both HEIs and FECs. Table 39 provides summary information on sources of fee payment from the HESA and ILR student records.

Table 39 Tuition fee payment

(2005-06 foundation degree home entrants registered at English HEIs and FECs)

Source of tuition fee	Full-time		Part-time	
	Number	%	Number	%
No support	6,100	36%	5,100	50%
Statutory student support (part or whole)	7,400	44%	1,100	11%
Department of Health and related bodies	335	2%	165	2%
Other payment by public bodies or charities	105	1%	150	1%
Employer	790	5%	2,200	22%
Other	215	1%	325	3%
No fee or fee waived	585	4%	470	5%
Unknown	1,210	7%	695	7%
Total	16,740	100%	10,200	100%

Table 39 note

Data sources: ILR and HESA student records

164. Being based on entrants rather than qualifiers, Table 39 is not directly comparable with Table 38 and, as we reported previously, at the level of individual records there is poor consistency between the DLHE and student records. There are concerns that in cases where a student makes the actual payment to the HEI and then is able to claim the amount from their employer, the employer may not be captured as the tuition fee source. Nevertheless, both the DLHE and student records provide no evidence that any more than a minority of even part-time students are getting support from employers in the form of fee payment.

Conclusions and policy implications

165. These results are further evidence in support of the conclusions and policy implications set out in the first set of key statistics reported last year (HEFCE 2007a). Because of the year-on-year expansion of foundation degree provision, these new results are based on larger numbers and are correspondingly more reliable.

Growth of foundation degree provision

166. The growth of foundation degree provision over the first six years since their introduction has been dramatic, with over 71,000 students registered for the 2007-08 academic year.

167. The growth in the number of students on foundation programmes continued for 2007-08 with an increase of 6,500 entrants, somewhat smaller than for the previous year. It is not certain whether this reduced growth rate is real or due to inaccuracies in the estimates of entrant numbers, but, whatever the reason, it means we have no clear trend from which to extrapolate future student numbers. However, even if there were no further increases in the numbers of entrants, we would expect total student numbers to rise to about 97,000 before 2010. The government target of 100,000 students by 2010 should be met even if the future growth in numbers of students were to fall from over 11,000 to 8,000 per annum.

168. There have been two developments that could impact on the numbers of students on foundation degree programmes in future. Firstly, some further education colleges may be given powers to award foundation degrees. This may reduce the time it takes to introduce new programmes. Secondly, government announced its intention to stop providing funds for students with higher education qualifications from studying towards equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs), but with an exemption for students on foundation degree programmes. In 2005-06 nearly one in four entrants to part-time foundation degree programmes had an HE qualification, so these programmes are already providing opportunities for those with HE qualifications. With the introduction of the ELQs policy and with the exemption for foundation degree programmes, it may be that foundation degree programmes see an increase in demand from students with HE qualifications.

Widening participation

169. This further evidence supports the conclusion that foundation degrees will both attract people from a 'broader range of backgrounds' and provide alternative routes into higher education for those who are not the 'traditional A-level school leaver', as envisaged in the original government consultation.

Organisation of courses

170. With the majority of foundation degree programmes established for two or more years, the responses to the question about the organisation of courses in the 2007 National Student Survey (NSS) were more positive than the year before. However, there is still evidence that more work needs to be done to ensure the smooth running of courses.

Balancing study with work and other responsibilities — flexible provision

171. Foundation degrees generally are not 'flexible' in the ways often envisaged. More than half of students entered full-time programmes, there is little movement between full- and part-time programmes or between institutions and most programmes have a definite course length. However, when students do change mode of study or institution, most progress to the next year of the programme, so some sort of recognition of previous study, through a credit scheme or otherwise, must be operating.

172. Comments made by students through the most recent National Student Survey reinforce the earlier feedback suggesting that flexibility may not be the only, or even most important, feature to help students juggle work, study and other responsibilities. They point to the need for stability and a timetable that is known well in advance.

Progression and achievement

173. The completion rates reported here are based on bigger cohort sizes than those reported previously. The new figures generally confirm what was reported previously, with about half of the students gaining an HE qualification within the expected course length and about a quarter of students still studying. The main exceptions are those on part-time two-year programmes, where one in three or fewer students qualify in the expected time. As long as there are ways to extend study time there is no harm in aiming to complete in two years, but institutions should look at the outcomes of these programmes. Where only a minority of students complete within the expected time, institutions should ensure that prospective students are aware of this and are prepared to study over a longer time period.

174. There is further evidence that most students progressing to honours degrees do so smoothly, with their foundation degree programme fully recognised as equivalent to two years full-time honours degree study. A higher proportion of the 2004-05 foundation degree qualifiers who progressed to honours programmes graduated than the previous cohort, but there is still some evidence that a minority of students may have difficulty with the transition.

Support from employers

175. The evidence suggests that students, even part-time students, do not get their tuition fees paid by their employer, or receive any other financial support. This underlines the challenge of the employer engagement programme, to develop provision to which employers will be willing to make a contribution significantly greater than the fee.

Describing foundation degree programmes

The academic subject classification (JACS) is not always well suited to describing foundation degrees. The new HESA record being collected for 2007-08 will facilitate the identification of courses and it is hoped that future reports will be able to describe foundation degree provision in ways that will be more recognisable to stakeholders.

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List of abbreviations

APEL	Accreditation of prior experiential learning
BTEC	Formerly 'Business and Technology Education Council'. This body merged with London Examinations in 1996 to form Edexcel. The term is now used for a group of Edexcel qualifications.
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Skills, predecessor to DIUS
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DLHE	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education
ELQ	Equivalent or lower qualification
FE	Further education
FEC	Further education college
HE	Higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council For England
HEI	Higher education institution
HEIFES	Higher Education in Further Education Students Survey
HEIPR	Higher Education Initial Participation Rate
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HESES	Higher Education Students Early Statistics
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
JACS	Joint Academic Coding System
LPN	Low participation neighbourhood
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NSS	National Student Survey
NS-SEC	National Statistics Socio-economic Classification
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OU	Open university
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
VCE	Vocational Certificate of Education

Annex A

Reconciliation of aggregate and individual data

Introduction

1. This annex briefly describes how the numbers of foundation degree students for 2005-06 within Table 2 of the main report relate to the numbers in the rest of the report.
2. Data about students are collected in two different ways:
 - a. For funding purposes an aggregate return is made early in an academic year. It includes estimates of the number of students who will be aiming for a recognised HE qualification at an institution in that year.
 - b. At the end of an academic year each institution returns individual student data to HESA or the LSC for all students attending the institution during the academic year.
3. For the purpose of explaining the differences Table A1 gives a description of the populations used in the report.

Table A1 **Population definitions**

Population	Definition
Population 1	HESES and HEIFES aggregate data returns – Table 2
Population 2	Individualised data using HESES\HEIFES definitions
Population 3	Student population using Table 11 definitions
Population 4	Entrant population using Table 11 definitions

Aggregate and individualised aggregate data

4. Here we explain the differences between the HEFCE aggregate data and the HESA and LSC's individualised student data returns based on the HESES and HEIFES population definitions (in other words, between populations 1 and 2). The HEFCE aggregate HESES (for HEIs) and HEIFES (for FECs) returns used in Table 2 provide only limited information, and the registrations after 1 December are predictions.
5. Table A2 gives the total numbers of foundation degree students shown in Table 2 and figures from HESA and ILR data, using the same definitions.

Table A2 **Comparison of populations 1 and 2**

Population	HEI		FEC		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Pop 1: HESES/HEIFES	20,740	17,005	6,170	2,865	46,780
Pop 2: HESA/ILR	20,795	16,140	6,120	3,800	46,860

Difference	-55	860	50	-935	-80
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6. The most common reason for the differences between population 1 and population 2 in Table A2 is the over- or under-estimation of the numbers of students returned on the HEFCE aggregate data collections, for students that start a programme of study after 1 December (for HEIs) or 1 November (for FECs).

7. The match between the aggregate returns and the re-creation of these returns using HESA and ILR data is much closer for full-time students. This is in part due to the fact that fewer full-time programmes start after 1 December, so the uncertainties associated with predicting registrations are smaller.

8. We see for HEIs the part-time aggregate figures are higher than for the re-created figures, while for FECs it is the other way round. Overall the total part-time figures are quite close. This is different from the 2004-05 figures as analysed in the previous report (HEFCE 2007/03) The part-time aggregate figures were 3,030 higher than those for the re-created figures.

9. In 2004-05 there was a high proportion of new programmes, which would make it difficult for institutions to forecast registrations. It seems likely that the figures based on HESA and ILR records are closer to the actual figures. This interpretation would explain the apparent stalling of part-time numbers between 2004-05 and 2005-06 (see Table 2). The 2004-05 figures were inflated and the 2005-06 were figures about right, so the real growth of about 3,000 students was not apparent.

Individualised aggregate and foundation degree analysis

10. Table A3 gives the total number of foundation degree students from HESA and ILR data following HESES and HEIFES definitions, along with the total student numbers following the definitions used in the report.

Table A3 Comparison of populations 2 and 3

Population	HEI		FEC		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Pop 2: HESES/HEIFES re-creation	20,795	16,140	6,120	3,800	46,860
Pop 3: students Table 11 definition	21,885	16,265	6,160	3,475	47,785
Difference	-1,090	-125	-35	325	-925

11. The differences between populations 2 and 3 are net differences. Some student counts are included in population 2 but not in population 3, and vice versa.

Students counted in population 2 but not in population 3

Population 2 includes multiple records for the same student. Typically this will be students registered with an HEI and taught at an FEC who are correctly returned by the HEI but wrongly returned by the FEC. Such multiple records are de-duplicated for population 3.

Students counted in population 3 but not in population 2

The most common reasons for the student appearing in population 3 that are not in population 2 are:

- a. Students explicitly excluded from the HESES or HEIFES population determined by the institution. For example, this could be because the course is a closed course.
- b. Students that withdrew before 2 December (November) 2005 are excluded from the HESES (HEIFES) populations.
- c. Students with a load of less than 3 per cent (typically students returned with a very low or zero FTE – in many cases for no obvious reason.
- d. Students in the first academic year of a non-standard programme where the institutions do not return then until the following year in the HESES or HEIFES record.

Foundation degree analysis and entrants

12. The majority of the tables in the main report give entrant numbers; Table A4 shows the total number of foundation degree students and entrants which can be found in Table 11 of the main report. Table 11 includes overseas and EU students, and shows the numbers of home students which give the totals for other tables.

Table A4 **Comparison of populations 3 and 4**

Population	HEI		FEC		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Pop 3: students Table 11 definition	21,885	16,140	6,120	3,800	46,860
Pop 4: entrants Table 11 definition	13,420	8,355	4,185	2,060	28,020
Difference	8,465	7,785	1,940	1,740	18,835