

Widening Participation in Further Education

Statistical Evidence 1996-97

Notes to accompany the Statistical Evidence Spreadsheet available to download from
www.fefc.ac.uk/data/wp_se.exe

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WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Statistical Evidence 1996-97

INTRODUCTION

1 In response to the recommendations of the Kennedy report of July 1997 the Council indicated its intention to produce an annual statistical bulletin on widening participation in further education. This is the first such bulletin.

PUBLICATION OF WIDENING PARTICIPATION DATA

2 The tables in this bulletin are derived from the individualised student record (ISR) returns made by institutions to the Council for 1996-97. This provides a national picture of further education in 1996-97 in relation to widening participation. The tables in this bulletin include data for all colleges and external institutions funded by the Council in 1996-97. The data are based on students recruited before the results of the widening participation committee were published and therefore will not reflect any changes in recruitment brought about by the committee's recommendations.

3 The information in this bulletin provides a context for colleges and other providers to set targets and measure their comparative performance in widening participation.

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION

4 The appendix provides information on terms and abbreviations used in the tables.

BASELINE DATA

5 The text below provides a factual commentary on each table to assist the reader to identify key points.

Tables W1 to W6

6 These tables provide baseline student numbers similar to those in statistical first releases, published by the Council in consultation with the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). These provide colleges and other users of this bulletin with contextual data.

7 Nationally, institutions recruit a higher proportion of female than male students. This applies to full-time full-year and part-time courses; however, more males than females are recruited on to full-time part-year courses. Overall, younger students are more evenly distributed between the sexes, but marked differences in distribution occur between college types and mode of attendance. Significantly more female than male students are recruited among older age-groups, again with differences between college types and mode of attendance.

8 Around 6% of further education (FE) students attend sixth form colleges. For the 16 to

18 age-group, this increases significantly to around 18%. The majority of these are full-time full-year students. Around 84% of FE students attend general further education and tertiary colleges. For the 19 to 24 age-group this rises to 89% the majority of whom are studying part-time.

9 Nationally, around 25% of students are studying for level 3 qualifications. For females aged between 16 and 18 this figure increases to around 60% and for male students aged between 16 and 18 over 50%. Around one-third of adult students were studying qualifications at entry level or level 1.

ETHNICITY

Tables W7 to W10

10 These tables show the characteristics of students by ethnic group. Nationally further education institutions are recruiting a higher proportion of students from ethnic minorities than the percentage in the population generally.

11 Higher proportions of students studying at external institutions are from ethnic minorities compared to other institutions. Other colleges (agriculture and horticulture colleges, and art, design and performing arts colleges) recruit lower proportions of students from ethnic minorities than other institutions.

12 The ethnicity profile of students varies by mode of attendance. A much higher proportion of full-time full-year students are from ethnic

minorities than is the case for part-time students. The ethnicity profile of students studying at each level of qualification is very similar.

LEVEL OF PRIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Tables W11 to W14

13 These tables show the characteristics of students by level of prior achievement. For the first time in 1996-97 institutions were required to provide complete qualification on entry data for all qualifications for 16 to 18 year-old students for whom a full ISR record is requested. Full qualification on entry data are not required for all adult students. Accordingly these tables are restricted to 16 to 18 year-old students.

14 As noted in the appendix the category 'prior attainment unknown' includes those students with no recorded qualifications on entry. It is not possible at present to distinguish reliably between those students who have qualifications on entry but have not provided details of them to the college and those students who genuinely have no qualifications on entry. The ISR is being modified from 1999-2000 to make this distinction clear.

15 Even amongst the younger students there are marked differences in the levels of prior attainment. Colleges had recorded prior attainment for around 60% of 16 year olds with around one-third of all female and one-quarter of all male students having achieved foundation target 1. Prior attainment was only recorded for around 40% of 18

year-old students, with less than one-fifth having reached foundation target 1.

16 In sixth form colleges, nearly 70% of full-time full-year students had already achieved foundation target 1 before enrolling. The level of prior attainment was unknown for less than 10% of these students.

17 For all college types the level of prior attainment for a high percentage of full-time part-year and part-time students was unknown.

18 As might be expected, students enrolled on entry, level 1 and level 2 qualifications are less likely to have already achieved foundation target 1 than students enrolled on higher level qualifications.

PAYMENT OF TUITION FEES

Tables W15 to W18

19 These tables show the characteristics of adult students by payment of tuition fees. Students aged between 16 and 18 and studying full-time are exempt from paying fees.

20 Around 40% of both male and female adult students pay their fees in full. Colleges may remit students' fees in full if the student is in receipt of means-tested benefits or is the dependant of someone receiving state benefits. Fee remission is a way of identifying students on low incomes. In this case the college receives compensatory funding from the Council. In contrast the college may choose to remit in part or in full the fees of other students, as a matter of college policy. It will not receive compensatory funding.

21 Full-time full-year students are more likely to have their fees remitted than other students. Overall less than 20% pay full fees. However, over 50% of full-time full-year students in other college types (agriculture and horticulture colleges, and art, design and performing arts colleges) pay full fees.

22 Adult students enrolled on level 4 or above qualifications are more likely to be paying full fees and less likely to be unwaged than other adult students.

STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION UNITS

23 The Council introduced a widening participation factor into the funding methodology from 1998-99. The factor is based on a revised version of the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions index of local conditions applied at ward level. Details of the mechanism for calculating the factors are given on the Council's web site <http://www.fefc.ac.uk>. Those students that would have been eligible for additional widening participation units in 1996-97 have been identified using this method.

Tables W19 to W22

24 These tables show the characteristics of students eligible for additional widening participation units from different ethnic groups.

25 Overall, one-quarter of students are eligible for additional widening participation units. The distribution of these units between students from different ethnic groups varies significantly. Proportions range from around one-fifth of white students being eligible to nearly four-fifths of Bangladeshi students being eligible.

26 For both male and female students, a higher proportion aged between 19 and 24 are eligible for additional units than for any other age-group.

27 The profiles of students eligible for widening participation units studying at different

levels are similar for each ethnic group. In the main, students enrolled onto qualifications with levels not specified are most likely to receive additional units and those on higher level qualifications are the least likely to receive additional units.

Tables W23 to W26

28 These tables show the characteristics of adult students eligible for additional widening participation units by their fee remission status.

29 Students who are unwaged or students on Adult Basic Education or English for speakers of other languages qualifications are the most likely to be eligible for additional widening participation units, confirming the link described in *Widening Participation: statistical evidence* (November 1997) between the index of local conditions and other measures of low income. Those students who pay their fees in full are the least likely to be eligible for widening participation.

30 Full-time adult students are more likely to be eligible for widening participation units than other adult students. Again, those students paying full fees are the least likely to be eligible. Adult students enrolled at general FE and tertiary colleges are more likely to be eligible than adult students enrolled at other institution types.

IN-YEAR STUDENT RETENTION RATES

Tables W27 to W30

31 These tables show the characteristics of students retained in institutions analysed by ethnic group.

32 Nationally, females have a slightly higher retention rate than males. In virtually all cases, students aged 19 to 24 have lower retention rates than any other age-group.

33 Black Caribbean and Black Other are the ethnic groups with the lowest retention rate amongst full-time full year students. For part-time students Black African and Bangladeshi are the ethnic groups with the lowest retention rates.

Tables W31 to W34

34 These tables show the characteristics of adult students retained in institutions, analysed by their fee remission status.

35 For both males and females, retention rates tend to be higher for students aged 25 and over than for younger students. Unwaged and ABE or ESOL students have the lowest retention rates. Students who pay their fees in full or have them remitted under college policy have the highest retention rates.

36 For adult students those enrolled part time have a higher retention rate than those enrolled full time. In the main unwaged adult students enrolled at any institution type and on any mode of attendance have the lowest retention rates.

ACHIEVEMENT RATES

Tables W35 to W42

37 These tables show achievement rates calculated by comparing the number of students achieving a qualification with the total number completing courses intending to lead to one. The achievement rate will be lower than the pass rate for a qualification, as not every student completing a course will present themselves for assessment. The figures in these tables are based on qualification aims, so students with more than one qualification aim will be counted once for each.

Tables W35 to W38

38 These tables show the characteristics of students who achieve qualifications aims analysed by ethnic group.

39 Female students aged between 16 and 18 have the highest achievement rates. Amongst male students, the highest overall achievement rate is for those aged 25 and over.

40 Students in sixth form colleges have the highest achievement rates and external institutions tend to have the lowest. Black African students

have the lowest achievement rates out of all of the ethnic groups across all modes of attendance. White students have the highest achievement rates irrespective of mode of attendance and type of institution attended.

Tables W39 to W42

41 These tables show the characteristics of adult students who achieve qualifications aims with different fee remission statuses.

42 For male and female students of all adult age-groups those who have their fees remitted due to college policy have the highest achievement rates and ABE or ESOL students have the lowest. Overall, students aged 25 and over have the highest achievement rates. Adult males have higher achievement rates than adult females.

43 Part-time adult students have higher achievement rates than full-time full-year adult students. Full-time students who pay their own tuition fees have higher achievement rates than other students. In general ABE or ESOL students in any institution type on any mode of attendance have the lowest achievement rates.

NOTES ON TABLES

Abbreviations

ABE	Adult basic education
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
FE	Further education
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education

Council regions

EM	East Midlands
ER	Eastern Region
GL	Greater London
NR	Northern Region
NW	North West
SE	South East
SW	South West
WM	West Midlands
YH	Yorkshire and Humberside

Ethnicity

These tables exclude those students with unknown or not provided ethnicity.

General Notes

- represents fewer than 50 students in tables showing numbers and fewer than 200 students in tables showing percentages.

The basis of analysis for each set of the tables is different due to the various factors included. As a result, the totals in the sets of tables may not match exactly.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS USED IN TABLES

Achievement rate

The total number of qualifications aims achieved, as specified within students' primary learning goals, expressed as a percentage of the total number of qualification aims for which students have completed the learning programmes. Where a student has achieved at least half the credits or modules towards a qualification aim, this is counted as one-half achievement in calculating the total number of qualification aims achieved.

This is the same definition as used in statistical first releases and in calculating performance indicators but differs from that used in *Widening Participation in Further Education: statistical evidence*, published in December 1997.

Age

The age of a student at 31 August 1996.

Institution type

Four types of institutions are shown in the tables. These are:

general further education and tertiary colleges, which have broad vocationally-oriented curricula

sixth form colleges, some of which focus almost exclusively on GCE A level provision, while others are expanding the vocational aspects of their curriculum

other colleges, including art, design and performing arts colleges and agriculture and horticulture colleges

external institutions; institutions maintained by local authorities and others providing FE courses covered by schedule 2 of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* (the Act), under sponsorship arrangements set out in section 6(5) of the Act.

Ethnicity

The ethnic origin of the student, based on the student's self-assessment.

Funding status

Whether the student's provision is funded by the Council or not. A student, some of whose qualifications are provided using Council funding and some through other sources is counted as Council-funded if at least half of their guided learning hours in the current year are on Council-funded qualifications.

Guided learning hours

All times when a member of staff is present to give specific guidance towards the qualification or module being studied on a programme. This includes lectures, tutorials, and supervised study in, for example, open learning centres and learning workshops. It also includes time spent by staff assessing students' achievements, for example in the assessment of competence for NVQs. It does not include hours where supervision or assistance is of a general nature and is not specific to the study of the students.

In-year retention rate

The percentage of those students who, having enrolled on a learning programme of at least 12 weeks' duration, continue to attend at the end of the qualification or the end of the college year (31 July), whichever is sooner.

This is the same definition as used in statistical first releases and in calculating performance indicators but differs from that used in *Widening Participation in Further Education: statistical evidence*.

Learning programme

All of a student's learning activities towards their primary learning goal which involve the use of the resources of the institution at which the student is enrolled.

Level of prior attainment

The level of prior attainment calculated from the students' qualification on entry recorded on the ISR as follows:

Foundation attainment of 5 GCSEs
target 1: at grade A to C or equivalent

Points for those students not achieving
1 to 30 foundation target 1, a points
plus: score was calculated from their
GCSEs, from seven points for a grade
A down to 1 point for a grade G

0 points: those students who have not achieved foundation target 1 and only have qualifications recorded other than GCSEs

Prior attainment unknown: students who have no recorded qualification on entry. It has not been possible to distinguish between those students who have qualifications on entry but have not provided details of them to the college and those students who genuinely have no qualifications on entry.

Level of qualification

Qualifications are categorised by notional NVQ level according to the framework set out by the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT). This is as follows:

Level E: Entry level

Level 1: Foundation - includes NVQ level 1, GNVQ foundation level

Level 2: Intermediate - includes NVQ level 2, GNVQ intermediate level, GCSE

Level 3: Advanced - includes NVQ level 3, GNVQ advanced level, GCE A and AS levels

Levels Higher - includes NVQ
4,5,H: levels 4 and 5, HNC, HND and degree

Students with qualifications at more than one level are recorded at the highest level of any of their qualifications.

Major source of funding

The major source of funding for a student's learning programme, other than the Council or the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Mode of attendance

Students are classified into one of three modes of attendance, full-time full-year, other full-time and part-time. Students classified for statistical purposes as full-time are defined as those studying at least 450 guided learning hours a year, or for at least 150 guided learning hours in each tri-annual period or more than 16 guided learning hours a week for shorter courses. Students who enrol on or actually attend a programme of at least 450 guided learning hours a year are classified as full-time full-year. Full-time students who are not classified as full-time full-year are classified as other full-time. All other students are classified as part-time.

Payment of tuition fees

The reason for students having their tuition fees remitted.

Unwaged fees waived as either the student is receiving benefit or is an unwaged dependant of those receiving benefit

ABE or ESOL fees waived as student's primary learning goal is ABE or ESOL

College policy fees waived for another reason consistent with the local college policy

Other fees refunded/waived for other reasons

Paid in full tuition fees paid in full.

Primary learning goal

The end-point qualification or qualifications or other equivalent objectives to be achieved by the student within a minimum period of 12 months as set out in the student's learning agreement with the institution. It excludes qualifications that are either subsidiary or equivalent to other qualifications in the same subject already included in the primary learning goal.

Region

In this volume, region refers to the FEFC region in which the college where the student is enrolled is located. There are nine regions:

East Midlands
Eastern Region
Greater London
Northern Region
North West
South East
South West
West Midlands
Yorkshire and Humberside

Students eligible for widening participation units

Students who are eligible for widening participation units can be identified as those whose postcodes appear in the file published on the Council's website (<http://www.fefc.ac.uk>).

Type of qualification

Within the categorisation by notional NVQ level, qualifications are categorised by type into the following groups:

- Access to higher education
- GCE A/AS level
- GCSE
- GNVQ
- GNVQ precursor
- HNC/HND
- NVQ
- other

GNVQ precursors are BTEC first certificates, BTEC first diplomas, BTEC national certificates, BTEC national diplomas and the City and Guilds diploma of vocational education at intermediate level or at national level.

'Other' qualifications are those which do not fit into the above framework. Examples are RSA Computer Literacy and Information Technology, the CII Financial Planning Certificate and the City and Guilds Wordpower qualification.