RESEARCH

Customer Satisfaction with Higher Education Financial Support Arrangements - 2005/06 Wave 4

COI Communications and Jigsaw Research

department for
education and skills
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Research Report RR784

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No 784

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Skills.

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1 Background and Methodology

This research commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with COI Communications, is the fourth in a series, to measure customer satisfaction with the Higher Education (HE) student support administrative arrangements.

English and Welsh students going into Higher Education (HE) in 2005 were able to apply for low interest loans and, where applicable grants to help with living costs and support towards the cost of tuition fees. Applications are made online or to the students' Local Education Authority who assessed whether an individual was eligible and the amount they were entitled to receive. If an individual is entitled to help, the Government's contribution towards the cost of tuition fees is paid direct to their university or college, and any loan is paid to them in three instalments, normally timed to coincide with the beginning of term.

The DfES is undergoing a programme of work to modernise the whole process of applying for student loans, grants, and support towards the cost of tuition fees so that it is more streamlined, accessible and user friendly and delivers a more uniformly higher quality service to students.

The main objective of the research was to test customer views on student support arrangements before, and as, the changes arising from the modernisation are introduced to provide baseline levels against which future developments can be measured, and to provide early feedback on the initial stages of the changes including a more streamlined application approach. One of the changes that was implemented for the application process for academic year 2005/6 was the availability on an interactive online application form (which hadn't been available for the application process for academic year 2004/5).

The aim throughout the research was to look purely at the views of customers on the level and quality of service that they have received, rather than their views on the Government's student support policy.

The first wave of this research to provide initial baseline information was conducted in March 2003 and in two stages. An initial qualitative stage was conducted between 12-17 March 2003 involving in-depth telephone interviews with 6 students and 6 parents. This was used to help finalise the design of the main quantitative phase of the research by providing guidance on both the sample structure and questionnaire design. The main quantitative stage was conducted between 24-31 March 2003 and involved 728 ten-minute face to face interviews with students at their university or college campus and 115 ten-minute face to face interviews with parents. The report on this first wave was published in the DfES Research series in August 2003.

The second wave of quantitative research was conducted between 3 November and 5 December 2003 and involved 635 ten-minute face to face interviews with students and 232 ten-minute face to face interviews with parents. In addition, a further 101 interviews were conducted with students applying from six LEAs piloting a more streamlined application approach: Birmingham, Durham, East Sussex, Hampshire, Nottinghamshire and Waltham

Forest. Students from these pilot LEAs were all interviewed in colleges/universities within the same towns/cities as their LEA. The report on this second wave was published in the DfES Research series in May 2004.

The third wave of quantitative research was conducted between 15 November and 7 December 2004 and involved 607 fifteen-minute face to face interviews with students and 204 fifteen-minute face to face interviews with parents. All LEAs had the same streamlined application process, so unlike 2003, there were no Pilot LEAs to specifically research.

This fourth wave of research was conducted between 1 November and 12 December 2005 and involved 891 twenty-minute face-to-face interviews with students and 306 twenty-minute face-to-face interviews with parents. Within these total samples we interviewed 135 students and 103 parents who had applied via a Welsh LEA. Student financial support in Wales and England will be split off and managed separately from academic year 2006/7 onwards and therefore it was decided to benchmark the views of Welsh customers separately for this fourth wave of quantitative research before the changes come into effect. With this in mind, the number of interviews conducted with Welsh LEA students and parents was increased so that we could analyse both in isolation.

In order to understand some of the issues a bit more depth, 10 follow-up in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with 6 of the students and 4 of the parents who took part in the November/December 2005 survey. These interviews were conducted between 20th and 28th February 2006.

A number of quotas and exclusions were imposed on both students and parents to ensure that only those HE financial support customers relevant to this piece of research were included. A full list of the quotas and exclusions can be found in appendix 1.

In addition to ensure a broadly representative spread in terms of institution type and geographic location 15 traditional universities, 10 new universities and 7 colleges of higher education were included in the research. A full list of the universities and colleges included in the research are detailed in appendix 1. The number of interviews conducted in Welsh universities and colleges was doubled this year in order to increase the number of Welsh students that we interviewed. However, when analysing the total results we ensured that both Welsh students and parents had their scores down-weighted so the overall (English and Welsh combined) results are comparable with previous waves of research.

As with previous years, Welsh speaking students and parents were offered the option of conducting the interview in Welsh. In total:

- 35% of Welsh students could speak Welsh; and 8% actually conducted the interview in Welsh (i.e. 23% of Welsh speakers opted to conduct the interview in Welsh)
- 19% of Welsh parents could speak Welsh; and 2% actually conducted the interview in Welsh (i.e. 11% of Welsh speakers opted to conduct the interview in Welsh)

Future waves of the research are likely to be conducted annually during the autumn so that respondents are interviewed quite quickly after completion of the application process. Completing interviewing at roughly the same time each year ensures any comparisons between waves are valid. It's important to bear this in mind when comparing results from waves 2 and waves 3 with the results from wave 1 i.e. March 2003 when respondents' memories are likely to have been hazier, and perhaps less likely to recollect matters that annoyed or pleased them.

Some points about the report

Although both parents and guardians of students were interviewed for the research, throughout the report for ease of reference this group is referred to as 'parents'.

Throughout the report differences are shown by various subgroups:

- Financial Dependency: 'Dependent students' are those who had their assessment for higher education student support based on their parent's financial situation (or at least part of it), while 'Independent students' had their assessment based solely on their own financial situation (and that of their spouse if applicable)

- Mature/Non-mature: 'Mature students' are those who said they were studying as a mature student, while 'non-mature students' said they entered the course straight from school/college

- Social grade is shown in almost all the charts, as differences by social grade were considered important enough to compare on every question

    - For students and parents, the scores for social grades 'DE' are shown separately (definitions on the social grade categories can be found on page 14)

- All significant differences between sub-groups at the 90% level are ringed. Scores ringed in black indicate a sub-group score that is <u>higher</u> than students as whole. Scores ringed in red indicate a sub-group score that is <u>lower</u> than students as whole.

All other interesting sub-group differences are shown in separate tables. All significant differences at the 90% level are followed by '+' and might include a footnote indicating which score it is significantly different from. For example, on page 13, a percentage marked '**83+**[b]' means the score is significantly higher than the percentage in column B, while '**22+**[cd]' means the score is significantly higher than the percentages in both column C and column D.

Arrows show all significant differences at the 90% level between different waves of research. Up arrows mean the score has risen, while a down arrow means it has dropped.

2 Management Summary of Findings

When looking at the findings as a whole, it is clear that overall customer satisfaction with the Higher Education student financial support process remains mixed although scores among students have improved since November 2004 (and part way back to 2003 levels), principally due to problems occurring in 2004 when receiving student loans and when contacting the Student Loans Company, which seem to have been fixed, to some extent, in 2005. The fact that an interactive form was available in 2005 may also have had a minor impact on satisfaction. In addition, it's clear that the proportion of parents rating different aspects of service as 'poor' has fallen over the last year – another encouraging trend.

Although both groups were asked to concentrate on the service and process rather than the policy itself, there was evidence to suggest that those receiving less money than originally expected were less happy and this was reflected in their scores.

Although improving, there is evidence to suggest that parents have access to less information when finding out about Higher Education student financial support and are completing the most complicated part of the application form. These two factors are contributing to slightly lower levels of satisfaction. In addition, parents possibly have higher expectations of service and application processes based on past experiences that may also be contributing to lower levels of satisfaction.

It's worth noting that the process is likely to be regarded as a tedious task and that striving for large proportions rating the process as excellent or even very good might be unrealistic. With this in mind, it is probably worth concentrating on the proportion rating the process as poor to get a real measure of dissatisfaction. This group can be classified as negative, while those rating it as fair can be classified as a group neither happy nor unhappy. Throughout the research, approximately 5-15% of students and parents rate different aspects of the process as 'poor', suggesting that ratings are still reasonably positive for a process where it is hard to 'delight' customers and where scores of 'fair' can be classified as neither happy nor unhappy.

Students

When looking at the **whole process** from finding out about financial support to filling out the form to receiving their first payment, students are still generally positive and ratings have increased with 72% rating the process as good, very good or excellent (up from 68% in November 2004 but still down from 79% in November 2003). 10% rated the whole process as poor, while 17% rated it as fair.

Similarly, the majority (74%) found the process of **finding out about HE financial support** straightforward. However, a significant minority were unhappy with this aspect with 24% claiming it was not straightforward. Encouragingly though the majority of this group claimed it was 'not very straightforward' (17%) rather than 'not at all straightforward' (7%), suggesting that either no improvement or only a slight improvement is needed for the vast majority of students.

As in November 2004, most students awarded positive ratings for the **information available** in terms of clarity and amount available, although there are signs that the clarity could be improved, with one in ten rating this aspect negatively:

- 6% rated the amount of information available as poor, 16% as fair, 77% as good, very good or excellent
- 10% rated the clarity of information as poor, 23% as fair, 66% as good, very good or excellent.

A number of students (21%) found out about HE financial support later than they would have liked, although encouragingly this group mainly comprised of those finding out 'slightly later' (15%) rather than 'much later' (6%) than they would have liked. 69% found out at about the right time, with 6% finding out too early.

In general, ratings for the **application process** are improving although some aspects of the application process have declined over the last 12 months. It's important to bear in mind that the scores can be considered reasonably positive when taking into account consumers' dislike for form filling generally:

- 8% rated the whole application process as poor (down from 12% in 2004 but close to the 7% in November 2003), 17% as fair, 74% as good, very good or excellent (up from 64% in 2004 but close to the 73% in November 2003).
- There has been a decline in the proportion of students happy with the ease of getting hold of the form with 57% rating this aspect as very good or excellent (compared with 64% in November 2004). However, when looking at the combined positive score of good, very good or excellent there has been only a slight change with 86% rating it positively in 2005 compared with 88% in 2004 (i.e. some people have moved from 'excellent/very good' to 'good' over the last year). Only 3% rated this aspect as 'poor', while 8% rated it as 'fair'.
- There has also been a slight drop in scores for the form's ease and simplicity over the last year. 11% rated the simplicity and ease of completion of the form as poor, 27% as fair, 59% as good, very good or excellent (down from 64% in 2004).
- Ratings for the conciseness of the form are unchanged on November 2004, with 8% rating the conciseness of the form as poor, 24% as fair, 65% as good, very good or excellent.
- 2nd year+ students generally felt more positively about the form compared with previous years' forms. 30% thought it was better, while 11% thought it was worse (down from 16% in 2004). 2nd year students (as opposed to 3rd or 4th year students) were generally happier (as hopefully a number should see a clear difference between their 1st and 2nd applications). 36% of 2nd year students felt the form was better than the previous year's.
- An increasing proportion of students were happy with the amount of time it took from submitting the form to receiving a decision. 14% rated this aspect as poor (down from 21%), 21% as fair and 60% as good, very good or excellent (up from 54%).

- Again the majority were happy when it came to the clarity and level of detail explaining the financial support decision. 10% rated this aspect as poor (down from 15%), 17% as fair, 68% as good, very good or excellent (up from 60%). Importantly, 23% of students who received less financial support than originally expected rated the level of detail explaining the decision as poor, compared with 7% of those receiving more or about what they expected.

In terms of **help** needed, the majority of students referred to the supporting notes but less than half referred to the 'financial support' booklet, when filling out the forms. Encouragingly an increasing number are accessing Government websites i.e. the DfES website, Student Finance Direct website and Directgov. One in five people accessing a Government website is an encouraging proportion when we take into account the fact that a lot of people won't have access to the Internet when completing the form and that they may not need to access the website because the notes and booklet were sufficient.

Among these students, the majority generally found the help sources useful, with less than 5% rating either of the supporting notes or the financial support booklet as 'poor' and 70%+ rating each help source as good, very good or excellent (similar to November 2004 and 2003). Ratings of the websites were also encouraging with only 5% rating it as 'poor' but 81% rating it as good, very good or excellent (indicating that people found the information they were looking for).

A decreasing number of students needed to seek further help (36% down from 45% in November 2004 but similar to the 34% in November 2003), usually from the LEA but also from the Student Loans Company. Ratings for this help have improved since November 2004 (and part way back to levels seen in 2003), although there has been a large increase in the proportion rating the service from the Student Loans Company as poor.

- 76% rated the help from their LEA as good, very good or excellent (up from 67% in 2004 but still down from 81% in November 2003), while 10% rated it as poor (down from 13% in 2004 but still up from 5% in November 2003) and 10% as fair.

- 67% rated the help from the Student Loans Company as good, very good or excellent (up from 60% in 2004 but still down from 78% in November 2003), while worryingly 21% rated it as poor (not significantly up from 14% in 2004 but a large increase on 2003 when only 2% rated the SLC service as poor). 11% rated the service as fair (down on 24% in November 2004).

27% of students experienced problems when receiving their first **student loan payment**, although in a number of cases these problems may have stemmed from the student being late in applying or administration problems within the university or college. 16% of students (17% in 2004) claimed that their first payment for the year was late even though they said they had applied on time.

Parents

Although a similar pattern emerges among parents in terms of the order of priorities, encouragingly the proportion rating most aspects negatively has decreased over the last year and therefore the gap between parents and students is narrowing, with only slightly more parents dissatisfied about the application process than students.

When looking at the **whole process** there has been a slight improvement over November 2004 with only one in twelve parents rating this aspect negatively (8% down from 15%). 19% rated the whole process as fair and 72% as good, very good or excellent (up from 64%).

Parents are still as satisfied as students when it came to the straightforwardness of **finding out about HE financial support**. Just over a quarter claimed it was not straightforward (27%), with the majority of this group claiming it was 'not very straightforward' (21%) rather than 'not at all straightforward' (6%).

As with students, most parents awarded positive ratings for the **information available** in terms of clarity and amount available. Ratings for parents were slightly more negative than students for amount of information although similar to students for information clarity.

- 3% rated the amount of information available as poor, 23% as fair, 73% as good, very good or excellent
- 8% rated the clarity of information as poor, 24% as fair, 66% as good, very good or excellent (not significantly different from students).

Just over a quarter of parents (27%) found out about HE financial support later than they would have liked. 62% found out at about the right time with 6% finding out too early.

A similar pattern emerges when parents were asked to rate the **application process**. Again, scores were more positive than negative, although parents are still slightly less happy about this aspect than students at an overall level.

- 10% rated the whole application process as poor, 23% as fair and 67% as good, very good or excellent (up from 57% in November 2004 but no different to the proportion in November 2003).
- Encouragingly, there has been a positive shift over the last 12 months with regards to the simplicity and ease of completing the form. 7% rated the simplicity and ease of completion of the form as poor (down from 14%), 27% as fair and 67% as good, very good or excellent (up from 60%).
- 8% rated the conciseness of the form as poor (down from 12%), 29% as fair and 63% as good, very good or excellent (up from 58% in 2004 but still down from 67% in November 2003). This may be because the new colour coded form introduced in 2004 has fewer pages than the one used in 2003.

- There has also been an improvement in terms of the amount of time it took to reach a decision once the form had been submitted. 9% rated this aspect as poor (down from 17%), 24% as fair and 67% as good, very good or excellent (up from 57%).

- Again there has been an improvement for the clarity and level of detail provided explaining the decision about financial support. 6% rated this aspect as poor (down from 10%), 21% as fair and 71% as good, very good or excellent (up from 63%).

In terms of **help** needed, there has been little change since November 2003 with over two-thirds of parents (69%) referring to the supporting notes. Although now fewer than half (47% down from 57%) referred to the 'financial support' booklet when filling out the application form. Among those parents referring to the supporting notes and booklets, the majority generally found them useful, with only around 5% rating either the supporting notes or the financial support booklet as 'poor' and around three-quarters rating both these help sources as good, very good or excellent.

Unlike in previous waves, parents (39%) were just as likely as students to seek further help, and this tended to be either from their LEA (18%) and increasingly from the Students Loan Company (17% up from 2% in 2004). Parents' rating of the help provided by their LEA has decreased but was still generally positive and in line with ratings from 2003, while ratings for the Students Loan Company were also positive.

3 Sample Profile

Students

As demonstrated in table 3.1, there has been little change in the profile of students interviewed in November 2005 and those interviewed in previous waves. Two-thirds of the students interviewed were first year students and one in six students were financing their course independently (similar to November 2004 but still down from November 2003).

Student social grades were based on the 'Chief Income Earner' within the family and just over a quarter of the students interviewed had an AB social grading (up from November 2004 and November 2003 – but similar to March 2003). Just under a half had a social grading of C1. Approximately one in eight had a social grading of C2 (down from November 2004 but similar to March and November 2003), while one in seven were graded as DE. *(A definition of social grades can be found below table 3.1).*

There were no major differences between November 2005 and November 2004 in terms of types of colleges/universities students attended. In November 2005, just under a half of students attended a traditional university (down from 51% in November 2004), while a third studied at a new university. The remaining one in six were studying at a College of Higher Education (down from 25% in November 2003, but similar to levels in November 2004 and March 2003).

One in eight students were attending a university or college in Greater London (similar to 2004 but down from 21% in November 2003), while 16% were based in the South of England, outside of Greater London (up from 11% in November 2004). Just over a quarter were based in the North of England, while 21% were studying in the Midlands/East Anglia (down from 28% in November 2004 but similar to November 2003) and one in five were studying in Wales.

In terms of the location of their LEA, 14% applied via a Greater London LEA, while 24% applied to an LEA based in the South of England outside of Greater London (up from 15% in 2004 but similar to proportions in November and March 2003). A quarter applied via a Northern LEA, 25% via an LEA based in the Midlands/East Anglia and 12% through an LEA in Wales (down from 20% in November 2004 but similar to proportions in November and March 2003).

Table 1.1 Sample profile of students

	March'03 [a]	**November'03 [b]**	**November'04 [c]**	**November'05 [d]**
Base	(728)	(635)	(607)	(891)
Year of Course	%	%	%	%
1st year	65	69	65	65
2nd – 4th year	35	31	35	35
Financial Dependency	%	%	%	%
Dependent	80	78	**83+[b]**	**84+[b]**
Independent	20	**22+[cd]**	17	16
Mature vs. non-mature	%	%	%	%
Non-mature	NA	79	**85+[b]**	**85+[b]**
Mature	NA	**21+[cd]**	15	13
*** Social Grade based on Chief Income Earner in Family**	%	%	%	%
AB	**28+[bc]**	21	23	**29+[bc]**
C1	42	**47+[ad]**	44	42
C2	14	17	**21+[abc]**	12
DE	15	15	12	15
University / College Type	%	%	%	%
Traditional University	**55+[bd]**	43	**51+[bd]**	46
New University	27	**32+[a]**	**33+[a]**	**36+[a]**
College of Higher Education	18	**25+[acd]**	17	17
Gender	%	%		
Male	53	49	50	47
Female	47	51	50	53

Scores in bold and marked with '+' means the score is significantly higher than the opposite sub-group score. The letter after the '+' signifies which column score it is significantly higher than.

Table 1.1 Sample profile of students (continued)

	March'03 [a]	November'03 [b]	November'04 [c]	November'05 [d]
Base	(728)	(635)	(607)	(891)
Location of University / College	%	%	%	%
Greater London	**19+[cd]**	**21+[cd]**	13	14
South (excl. Greater London)	**14+[b]**	10	11	**16+[bc]**
Midlands	17	**21+[a]**	**28+[abc]**	**21+[a]**
Wales	17	20	**21+[a]**	**21+[a]**
North	**34+[bcd]**	28	28	28
Location of LEA	%	%	%	%
Greater London	15	16	15	14
South (excl. Greater London)	**24+[c]**	**22+[c]**	15	**24+[c]**
Midlands	18	**23+[a]**	21	**25+[a]**
Wales	11	13	**20+[abd]**	12
North	**32+[bcd]**	25	25	24

Scores in bold and marked with '+' means the score is significantly higher than the opposite sub-group score. The letter after the '+' signifies which column score it is significantly higher than.

* Brief Description of Social Grades based on Chief Income Earner:

- AB: Professionals, Self-employed with 5+ staff, Senior Foremen/Supervisors
- C1: Most administrative jobs, self-employed with 1-4 staff, students living away from home, Foremen/Supervisors (25-199 staff)
- C2: Skilled manual workers, self-employed (no staff), Foremen/Supervisors (1-24 staff)
- DE: Semi-skilled / Unskilled manual workers, Unemployed, Retired

Parents

As with students, there has been little change in the profile of parents interviewed in 2003 and November 2004 and those interviewed in November 2005. Approximately a half of parents had dependents in their first year of study, while just under a third had dependents in their second year and 28% in their third year of study (up from 19% in November 2004 but similar to proportions in November and March 2003).

There has been an increase since November 2004 in terms of the proportion of parents from social grade category DE. Just over a quarter of parents were from this social grading compared with 16% in November 2004. A similar proportion (27%) were from social grade AB, while 28% were C1 (down from 37% in November 2004). 16% were from social grade C2.

Table 3.2 Sample profile of parents

	March'03 [a]	**November'03 [b]**	**November'04 [c]**	**November'05 [d]**
Base	(115)	(232)	(204)	(306)
Year of Course	%	%	%	%
1st year	37	41	**50+[ab]**	**48+[ab]**
2nd year	**37+[d]**	33	31	29
3rd year	**26+[c]**	**26+[c]**	19	**28+[c]**
Social Grade based on Chief Income Earner in Family	%	%	%	%
AB	22	28	**31+[a]**	27
C1	**37+[d]**	**35+[d]**	**37+[d]**	28
C2	22	20	16	16
DE	20	17	16	**26+[abc]**

Scores in bold and marked with '+' means the score is significantly higher than the opposite sub-group score. The letter after the '+' signifies which column score it is significantly higher than.

4 Finding out about student financial support

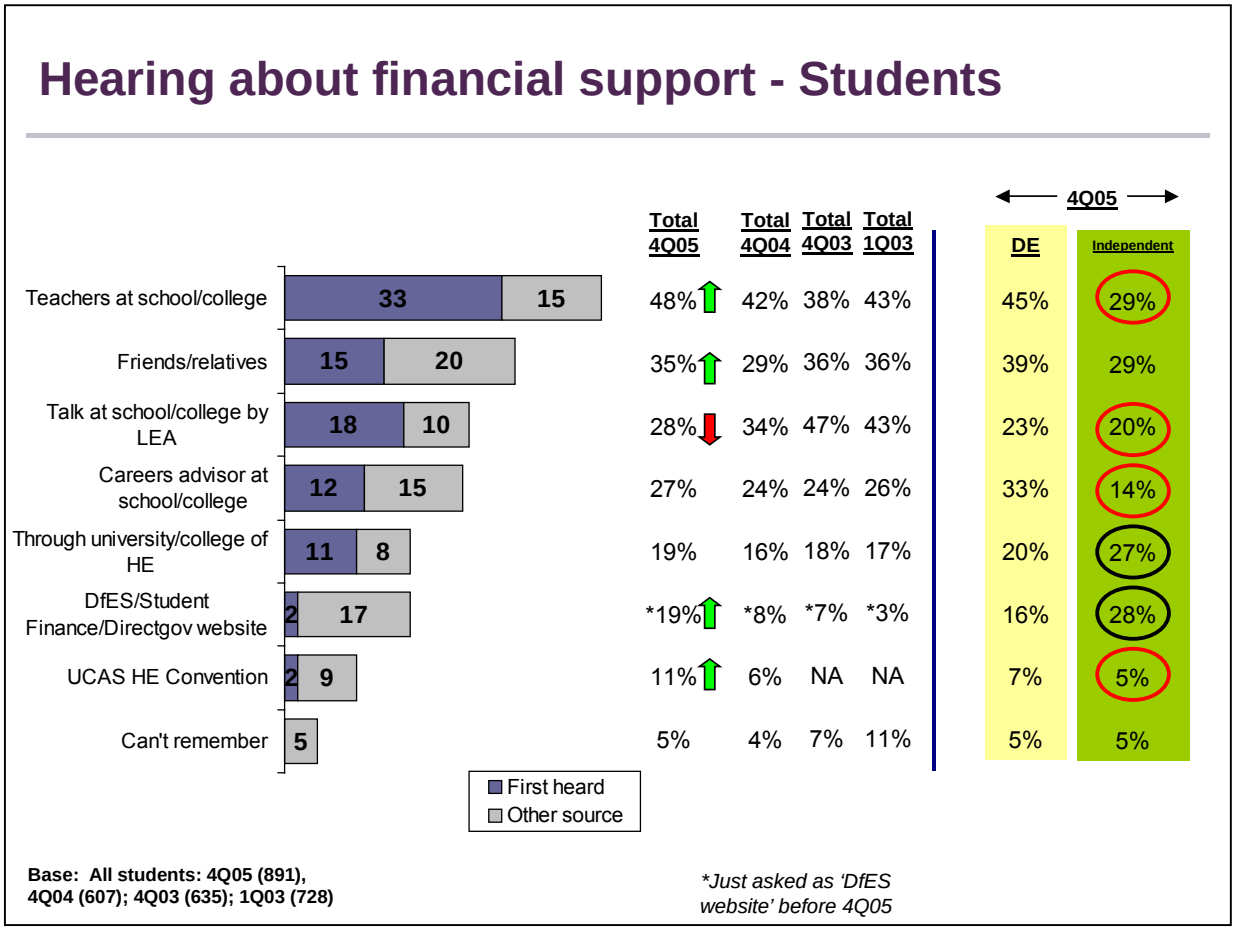
a) Information Sources

As chart 4.1 shows, the four key sources for finding out about financial support among **students** are talks at school or college either by teachers (48% up from 42%), by the LEA (28% down from 34% in November 2004 and 47% in November 2003) or by a careers adviser (27%) and through friends and relatives (35% up from 29%)

Other key sources of information are through the college/university itself (typically when visiting on open days) and websites. 19% of students find out about student financial support through a Government website such as the DfES website, Directgov or Student Finance Direct.

Not surprisingly, 'independent' students were more likely to find out about student financial support directly from the college/university and less likely to find out through talks at school. There were no significant differences between social grade DE students and students as a whole.

Chart 4.1 Hearing about financial support – Students



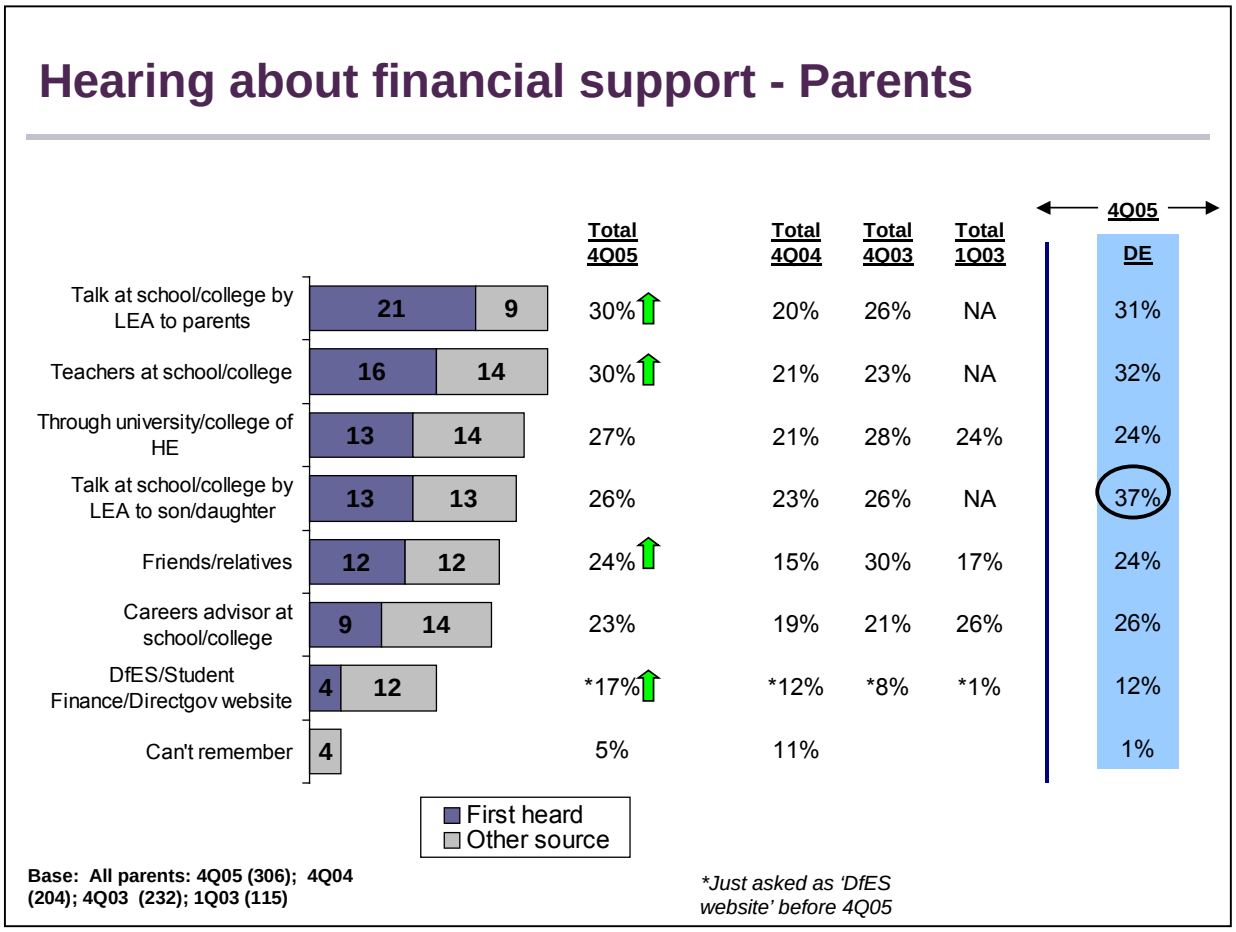
(Chart 4.1) For this chart and all future charts, all significant differences between sub-groups at the 90% level are ringed. Scores ringed in black indicate a sub-group score that is higher than students as whole. Scores ringed in red indicate a sub-group score that is lower than students as whole. So for example in chart 4.1, independent students are less likely than other students to hear about student financial support from a teacher, careers advisor or LEA at school, but more likely to hear through websites or directly with the college or university.

As indicated in chart 4.2, there has been an increase in the proportion of **parents** finding out about student financial support though LEA talks at school/college directly to the parents (30% up from 20%) and through teachers (30% up from 21%).

Just over a quarter found out through the university or college of higher education (27%) or LEA talks at school/college to their son/daughter (26%). Just under a quarter found out through friends and relatives (24% up from 15%).

Encouragingly DE parents are more likely to find out about student financial support through LEA talks to their dependents at school/college than ABC1C2 parents.

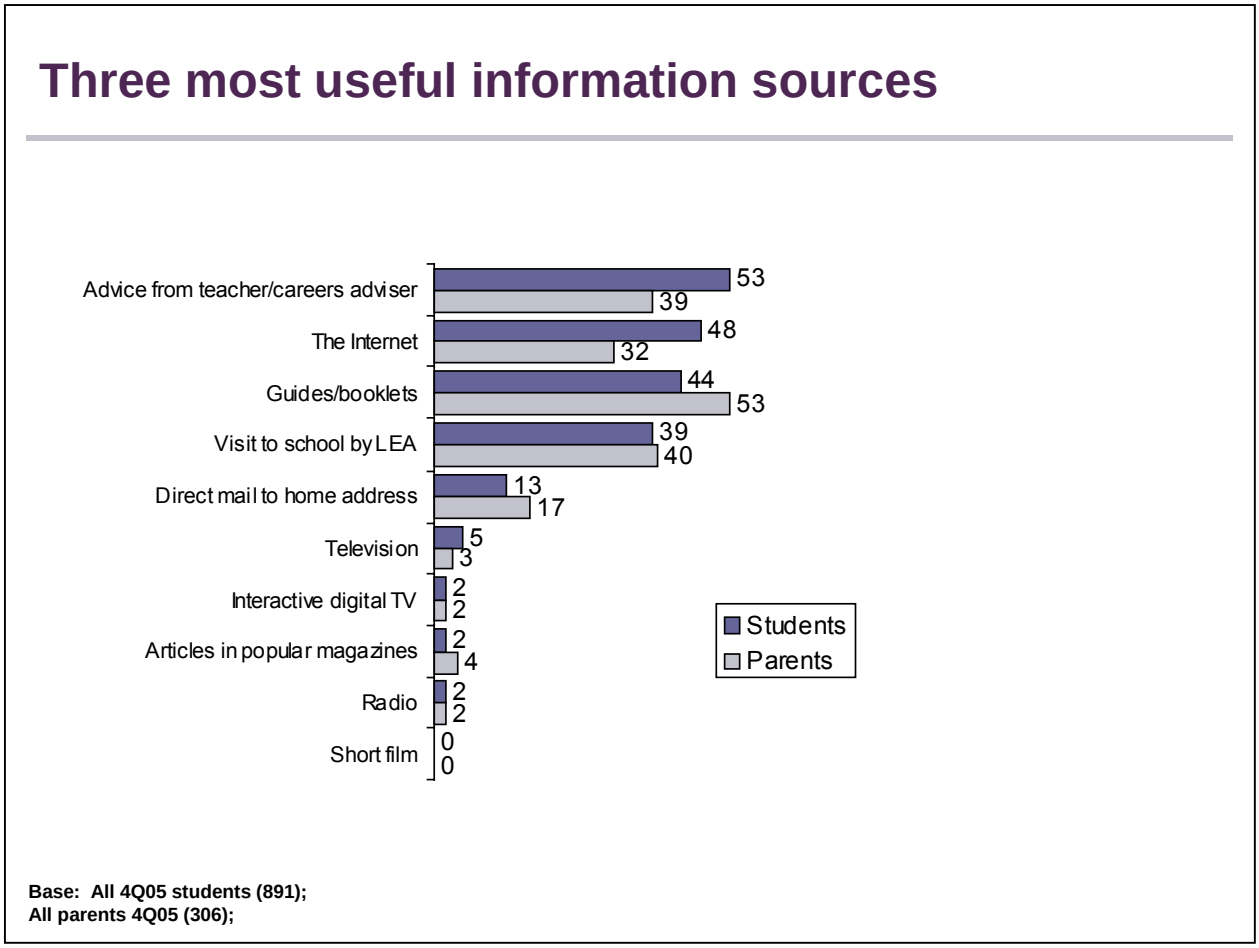
Chart 4.2 Hearing about financial support – Parents



Both students and parents tend to find the same sources of information the most useful (chart 4.3). When asked to choose three key sources of information from a list of ten, four sources emerged as more important than others. They were:

- Advice from teachers/careers adviser - 53% of students and 39% of parents chose this in their top 3 sources
- The Internet - 48% of students and 32% of parents chose this in their top 3 sources
- Guides/booklets - 44% of students and 53% of parents chose this in their top 3 sources
- Visit to school by LEA - 39% of students and 40% of parents chose this in their top 3 sources

Chart 4.3 Three most useful information sources

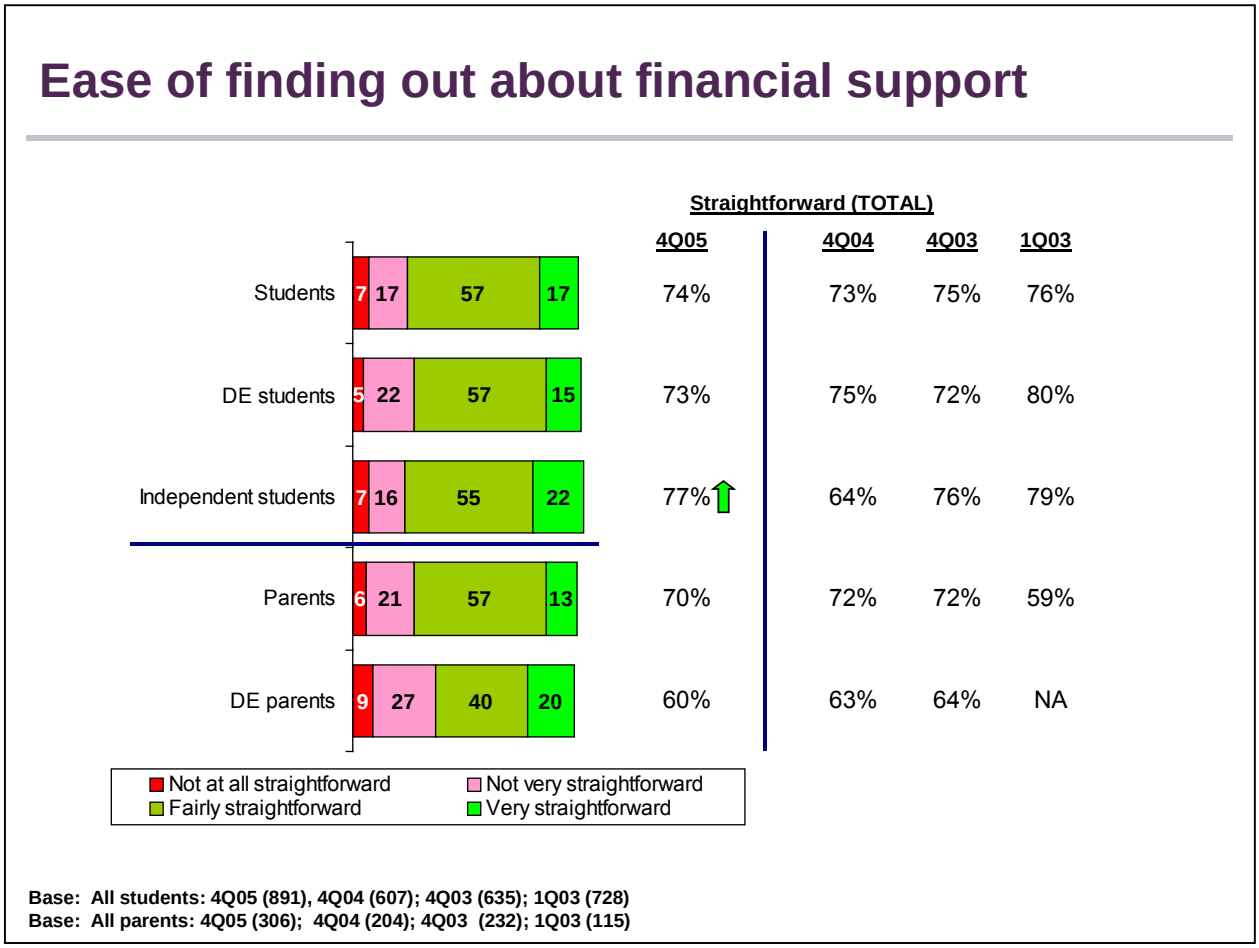


b) Ease of finding out about financial support

As chart 4.4 shows, approximately three-quarters of both students and parents found the process of finding out about student financial support straightforward. Attitudes among students have remained unchanged since March 2003 and the positive shift among parents between March and November 2003 has been maintained in 2005 with 70% finding the process straightforward compared with 59% in March 2003. Approximately a quarter of both students and parents did not find the process straightforward.

Although not a significant difference (due to the low base size of DE parents), it is important to note that fewer DE parents found the process straightforward when compared with parents as a whole (60% vs. 70%). However, there were no differences between students as a whole and DE students and Independent students. Independent students found the process more easy in 2005 than they did in 2004, although similar to 2003 (77% up from 64% in 2004 but similar to 76% in November 2003 and 79% in March 2003).

Chart 4.4 Ease of finding out about student financial support



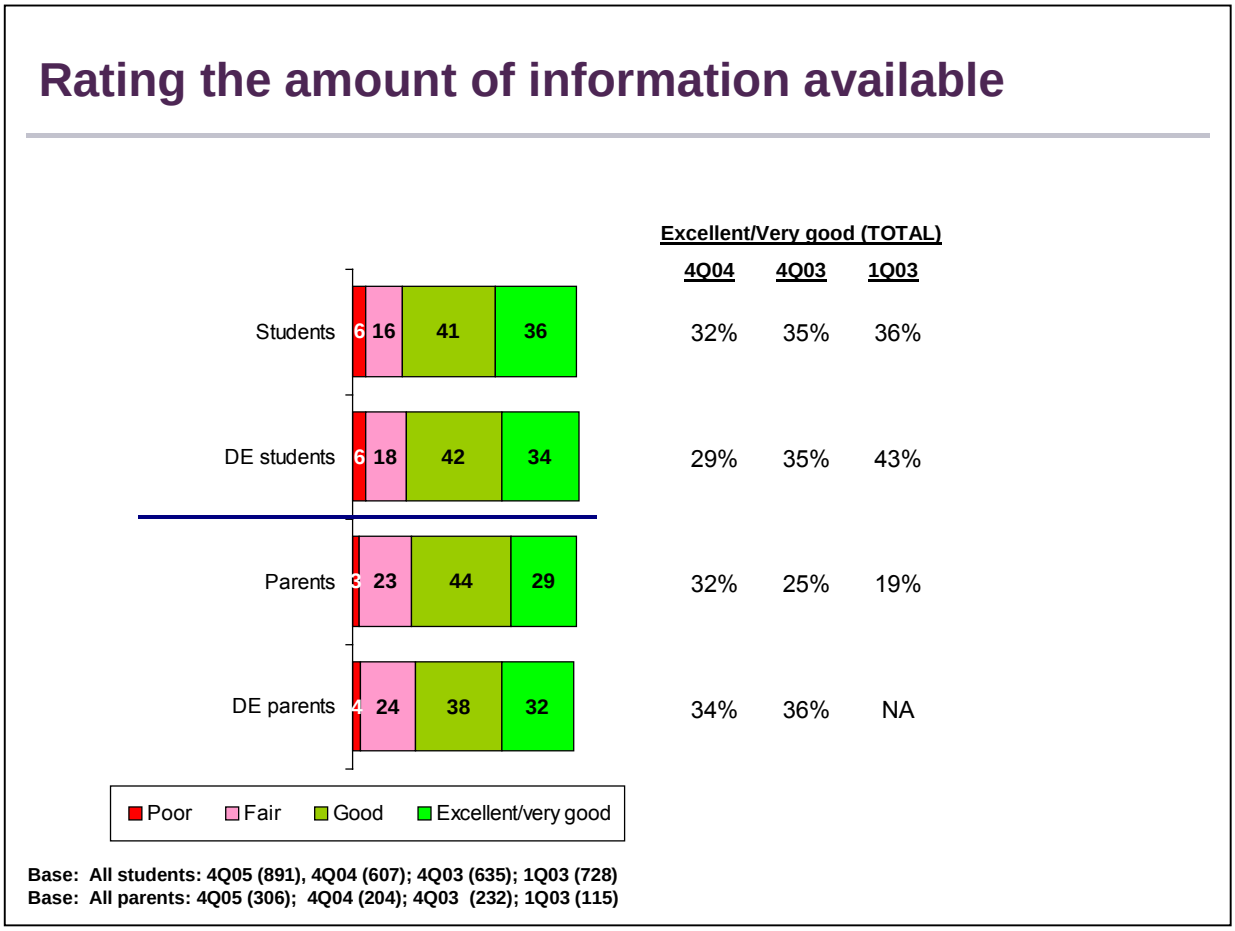
c) Rating the amount of information available

Views on the amount of information available remain mixed among both students and parents, with no significant changes since March 2003 and parents still overall slightly less satisfied with this aspect than students (chart 4.5).

A third of students found the amount of available information either excellent 5% or very good 31%. 41% rated the amount as good, while a quarter felt it was either fair 16% or poor 6%. As with previous waves, there is no evidence to suggest that DE students were less satisfied with the amount of information available.

Parents were slightly less satisfied than students. 29% of parents think the available information is excellent or very good, while 44% rate it as good. 3% rated the amount of available information as poor (down from 9% in November 2004) and 23% as fair. As with students, there is no evidence to suggest that DE parents were less satisfied with the amount of information available.

Chart 4.5 Rating the amount of information available



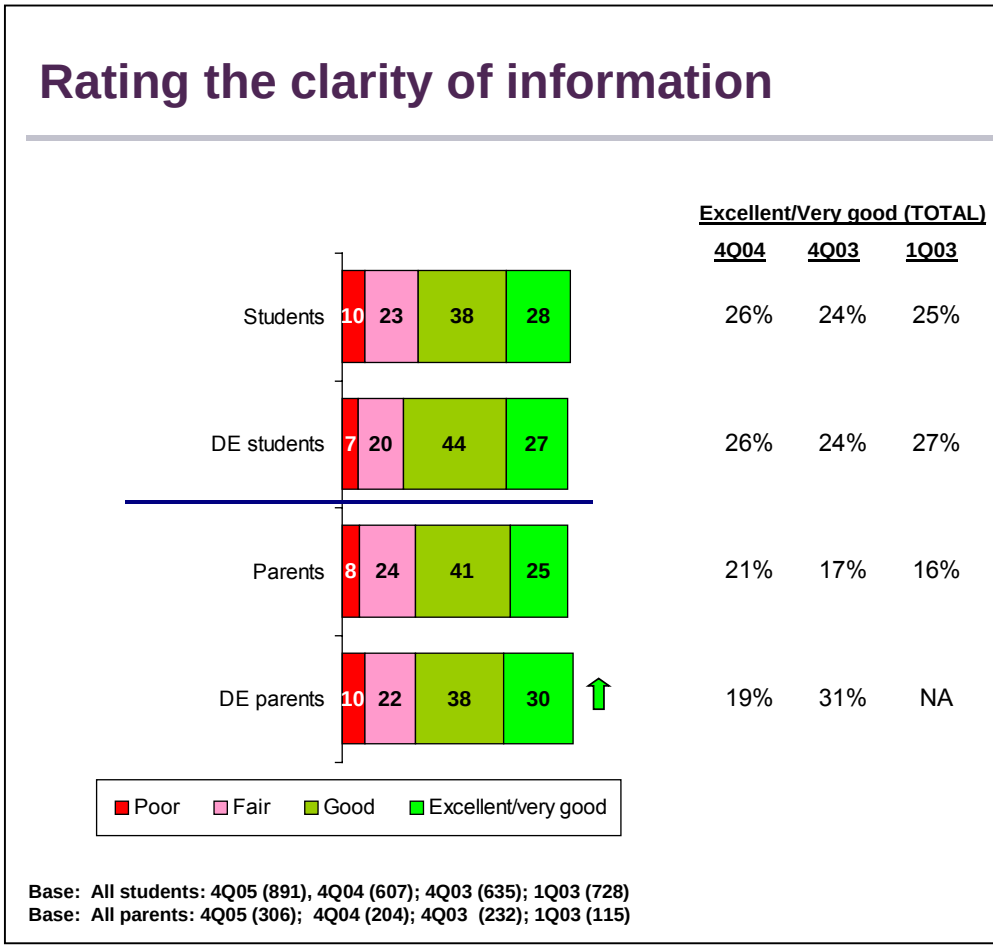
Rating the clarity of information

As with ratings for the amount of information available, ratings for clarity (chart 4.6) are mixed among both students and parents and have remained relatively unchanged since March 2003, with both groups still more likely to rate the clarity of information as fair or poor rather than excellent or very good. However, it's worth noting that even a score of 'fair' in the context of form filling can be deemed to be a respectable rating.

A quarter of students found the clarity of information either excellent 3% or very good 23%. 38% rated it as good, while a third felt it was either fair 23% or poor 10%. As in previous waves, there is no difference between DE students and students as a whole.

Overall, parents have seen a slight improvement and are now as satisfied as students with 8% rating the clarity of information as poor and 24% as fair. One in four parents 25% thought the clarity of information was excellent or very good. As with students, there is no difference between DE parents and parents as a whole, although DE parents are happier with the clarity of information than in November 2004 (back to November 2003 levels).

Chart 4.6 Rating the clarity of information



e) Timeliness of information

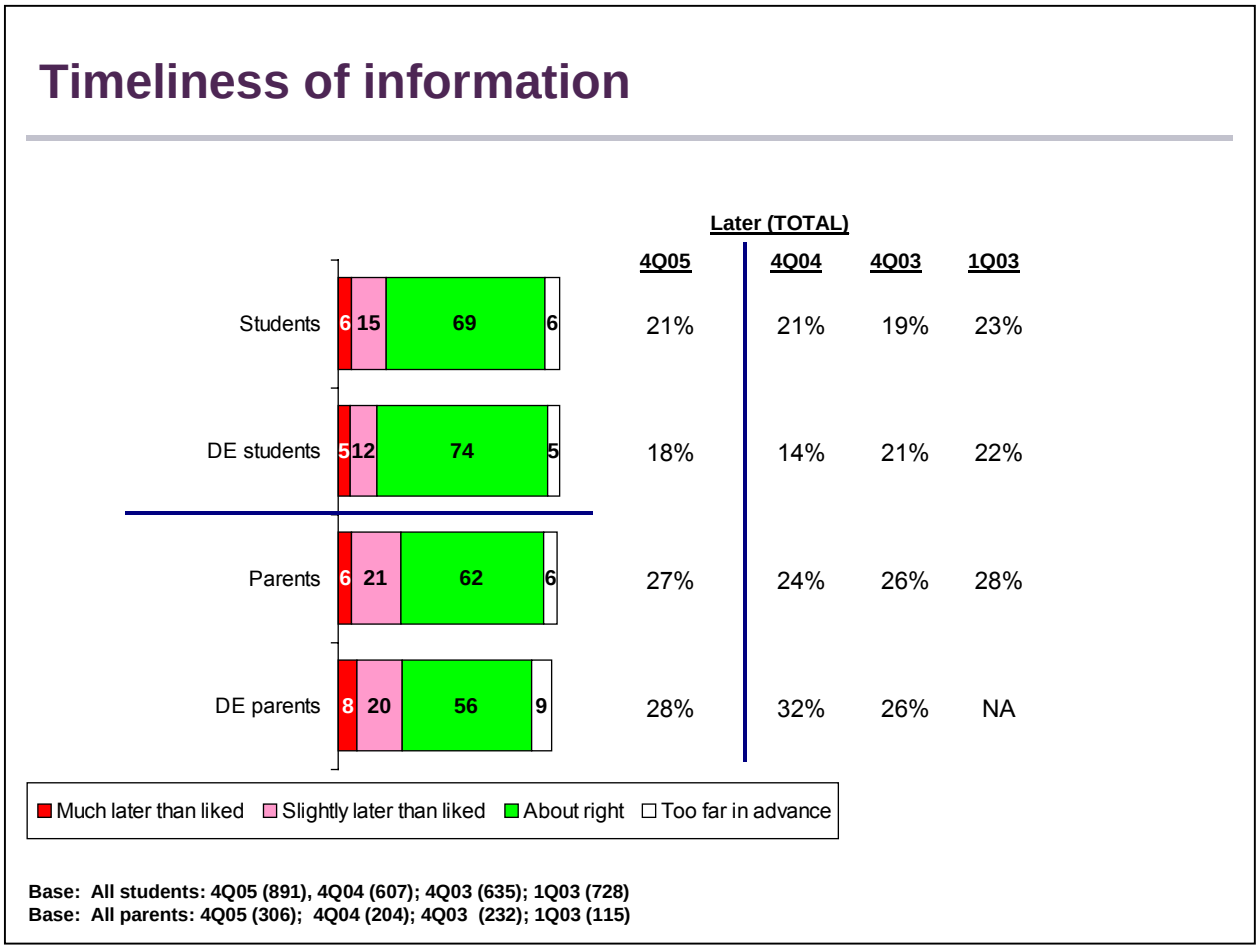
As in previous waves, the majority of both students and parents from the research conducted in November 2005 were happy with the timeliness of information (chart 4.7). Approximately two-thirds of students 69% and parents 62% felt that they had access to information about the right amount of time in advance of having to apply.

However, roughly a quarter of both students and parents felt they had access to information later than they would have liked. 6% of students felt they had access to information 'much later' than they would have liked, while the same proportion of parents felt they received the information much later than they would have liked (6% down from 11% in November 2004).

A minority (6% of students and 6% of parents) claimed to have received information 'too far in advance of having to apply'.

As in previous years, there was no significant difference between DE students and parents and other students and parents.

Chart 4.7 Timeliness of information



f) Findings from the qualitative research

The findings from the follow-up in-depth interviews tended to mirror the findings from the main study. The key sources of information when trying to find out about student financial support were:

- Through school (school staff or visit by the LEA)
- Through friends or relatives (usually older brothers/sisters)

The type of information given by teachers and careers advisers tends to be quite brief. It will usually be a quick announcement in class, and then students are invited to pick up an 'application pack' to take home and review.

Some students and parents would like a more detailed talk or discussion about student financial support with teachers or a representative from the LEA, with the ability to ask specific questions at the end (particularly important for parents who think their cases are not straightforward).

As we've found though previous research, parents tend to be less satisfied with this whole aspect because they are very dependent on what their son/daughter tells them and, for this reason, they tended to favour direct contact in the form of:

- A talk aimed at parents held at school (by either teachers or LEA)
- Direct mail (although recognition that it might be hard to identify parents of prospective students)

Most students and parents were alerted about student financial support either just before Christmas 2004 or, more likely, early 2005 (January/February). Although students were generally happy with this, parents were less so, with some preferring to find out sooner. Most want this information at least a year in advance of going to college/university (i.e. Autumn 2004), while some would like it before they enter the start 6th form (so Autumn 2003). Information at this stage should be fairly brief, but signpost people to more detailed information should they need it at this stage.

When asked whether they would prefer Local Authorities, central Government or the university/college to provide student financial support information in the future, there was a general preference for Local Authorities although:

- People didn't feel strongly about this issue i.e. if the process was demonstrably better (or no worse) then most would not object to this function being handled centrally or by the universities/colleges.
- Some would prefer central Government to handle this aspect. This was usually where the local service hadn't worked so well e.g. one student lived in one LA and went to

school in another LA, meaning he couldn’t pick up the pack from school – so a centralised system would have been better for this individual.

5 The application process

Once students and parents had been asked a series of questions relating to finding out about student financial support, their reactions to completing the forms were explored. For 1st year students, this was the full form, while for students in their 2nd year or above they may have received a shortened form. For parents, it was restricted to just the financial assessment part of the form.

a) Rating the whole application process

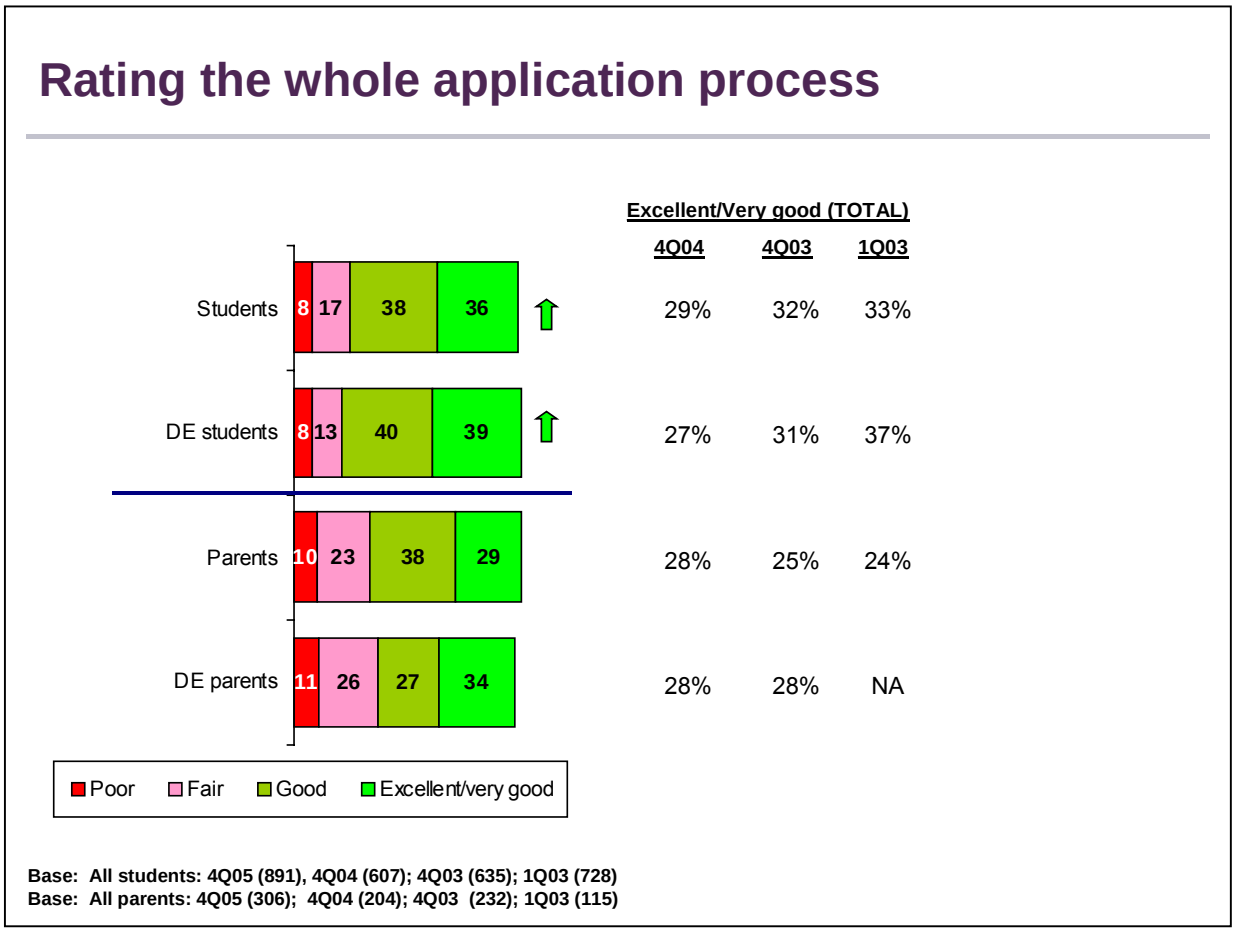
Before commenting on how students and parents rate the application process, it is worth noting that form filling is generally regarded as a tedious task and that striving for large proportions rating the process as 'excellent' or even 'very good' might be unrealistic. With this in mind, it is probably worth concentrating on the proportion rating the process as 'poor' to get a real measure of dissatisfaction. This group can be classified as negative, while those rating it as 'fair' can be classified as a group neither happy nor unhappy.

When looking at the combined good, very good or excellent scores (a positive score in the context of form filling), there has been an increase in ratings for both students and parents since November 2004 (although back in line with scores seen in 2003). 74% of students and 67% of parents in the November 2005 study rated the application process as good, very good or excellent (compared with 64% and 57% respectively in November 2004 and 73% and 69% respectively in November 2003).

Approximately one in ten students 8% (down from 12%) and parents 10% (down from 13%) rated the whole application process as poor (chart 5.1). Approximately one in six students and one in four parents rated the process as fair.

There were no differences among students and parents by social grade.

Chart 5.1 Rating the whole application process



b) Rating the form

All students and parents were asked to rate various aspects of the form, from the ease of getting hold of it and the ease of completion, through to the time it took to reach a decision.

As charts 5.2 and 5.3 show, there have been some slight changes in scores for students since 2004, although parent scores remain reasonably similar to last year. As with previous years though, students and parents are generally happy with the ease of getting hold of the form but less happy when filling out the form, the time it took to reach a decision and the clarity and detail behind that decision.

57% of students rated the **ease of getting hold of the form** as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ (down from 64% in 2004) and a further 29% rated it as ‘good’, with only 3% rating it as poor and 8% as fair. This aspect was not asked to parents.

One aspect that has deteriorated in the eyes of students was **the simplicity and ease of filling out the form**, which was rated as excellent or very good by only one in four students

(24% down from 29% in 2004). However as in 2004, 11% rated this aspect as 'poor' while just over a quarter 27% (26% in November 2004) rated it as fair. 59% rated it as good, very good or excellent. Therefore, although the excellent or very good scores have dropped, it is apparent these scores have moved to 'good' rather than 'fair' or 'poor'. Parents awarded similar scores although scores have improved with, encouragingly, only 7% rating this aspect as 'poor' (compared with 14% in 2004) with a further 27% rating it as fair. The remaining two-thirds 67% (up from 60% in 2004) rated it as good, very good or excellent.

Students were slightly more positive about the **conciseness of the form**, with 8% rating this aspect as 'poor' and 24% as 'fair'. 65% rated it as good, very good or excellent. There is no evidence to suggest that this is being driven by 2nd year + students who are filling out a shorter form. Their ratings of the form for being concise were similar to that of 1st year students. Unlike in 2004 when parents were more critical, parents in 2005 were more satisfied on this aspect with 8% rating the conciseness as 'poor' (down from 12% in 2004) and 29% as 'fair'. 63% rated it as good, very good or excellent (up from 58%).

Feelings were mixed among students with regards to **the time it took to receiving a decision after submitting the form**. 14% felt this aspect was 'poor' (down from 21% in 2004), while one in four 26% rated it as excellent or very good (up from 21% in 2004 but still a fall from November 2003 when 31% rated this aspect as excellent or very good). The large drop between 2003 and 2004 can probably be explained by the fact that the gap between sending off the combined form and getting a decision in 2004 is larger than the time gap when sending off the financial assessment form and getting a decision in 2003 i.e. the two-stage process in 2003 makes it seem like the decision is reached faster. There was no significant change in scores for parents though with 25% rating this aspect as very good or excellent (24% in November 2004, 28% in November 2003 and 26% in March 2003).

Feelings were also mixed for **the clarity and level of detail behind the decision** although there has been an increase in satisfaction among students**.** 32% of students rated this aspect as excellent or very good (up from 24%), with a further 36% rating is as good. 10% felt the clarity and detail was poor (down from 15%), while the remaining quarter 17% felt it was 'fair' (down from 24%). There were also some improvements among parents: 71% rated it as good, very good or excellent (up from 63%), 21% as fair and 6% as poor (down from 10%).

There were no major differences by social grade for either students or parents, although DE parents found the form easier to complete than other parents (possibly as they had more help filling it out from LEAs).

Chart 5.2 Rating the application process – students

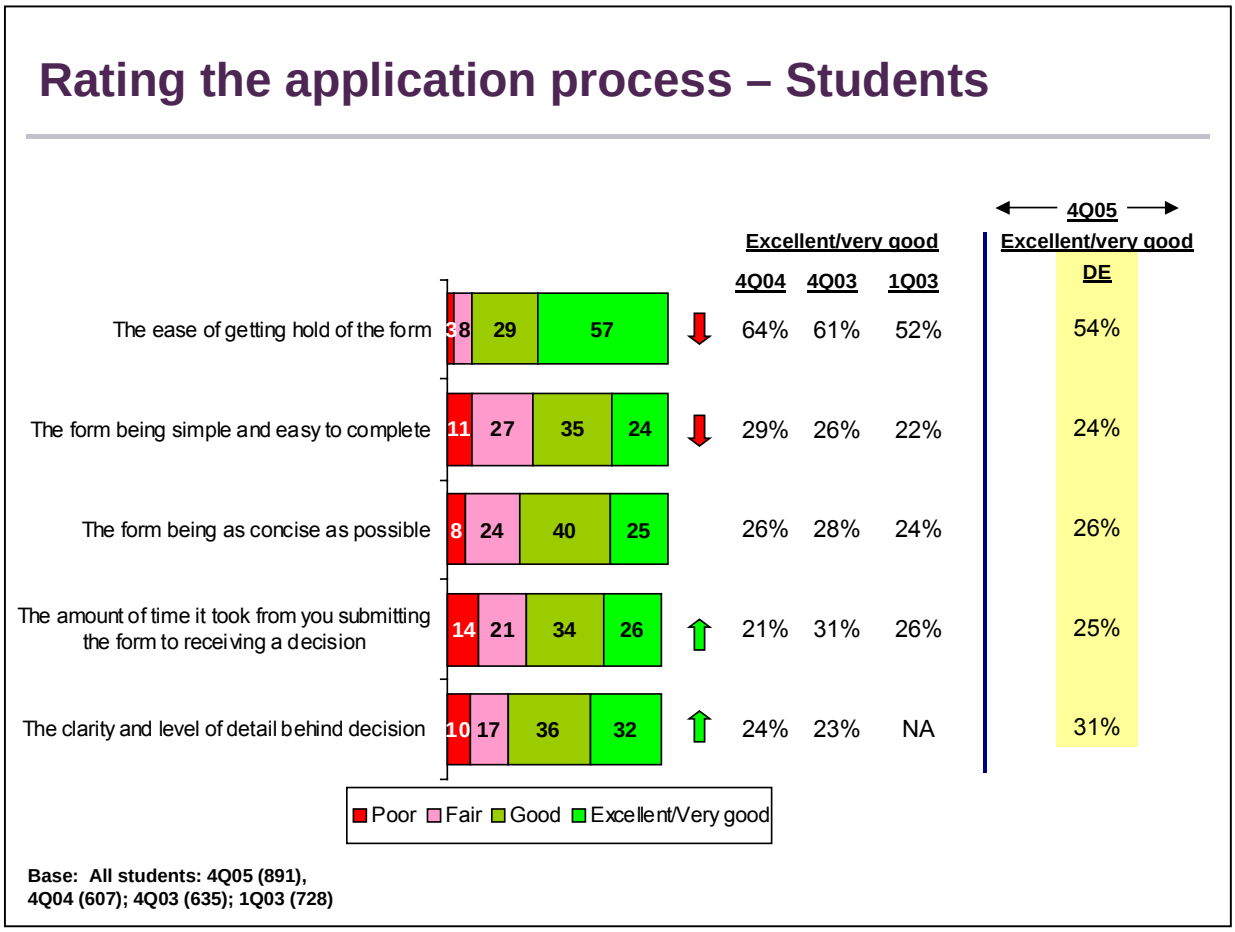
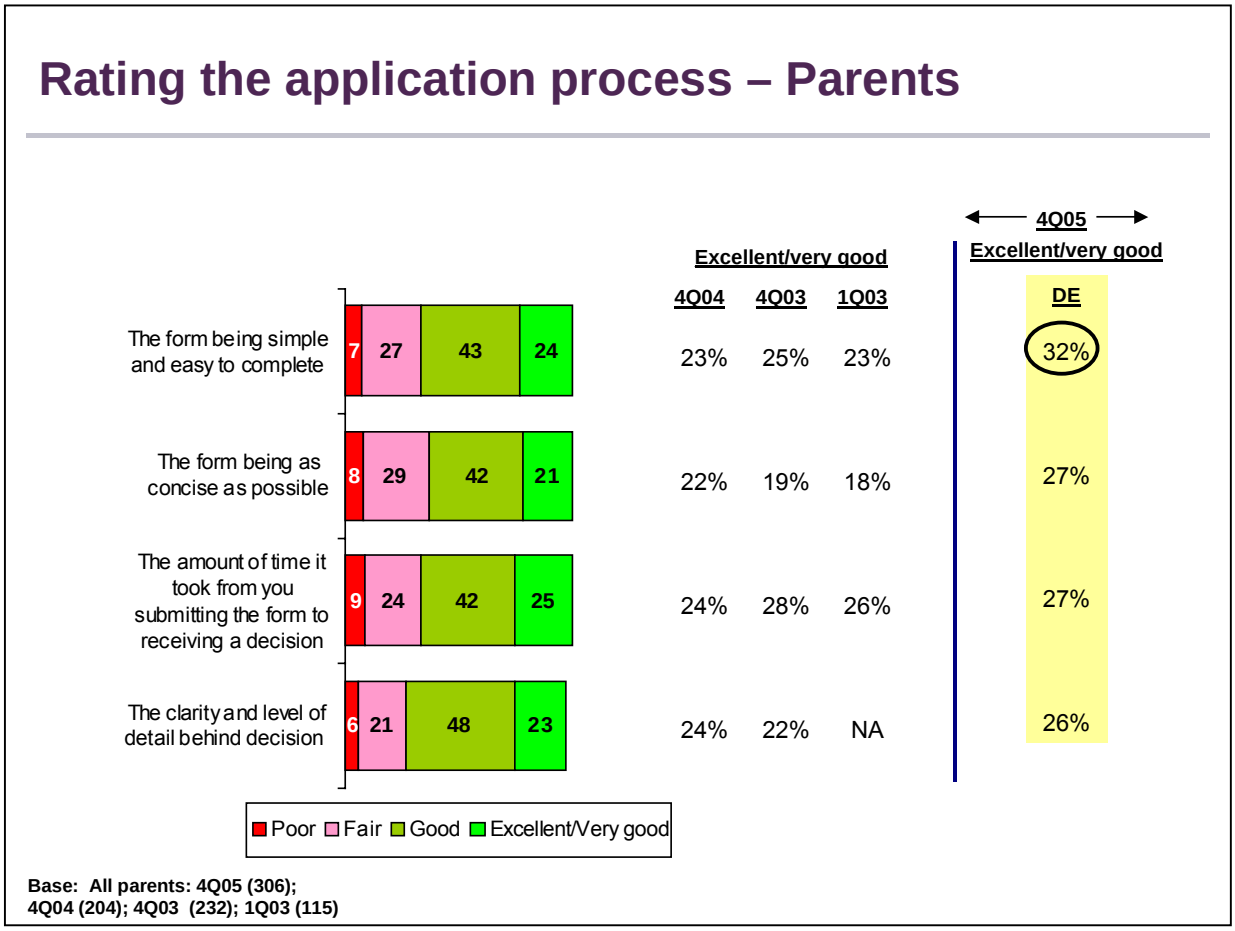


Chart 5.3 Rating the application process – parents



As demonstrated in table 5.4, 14% of students going through the application process in 2005 used the calculator on the StudentSupportDirect website.

Table 5.4 Whether used calculator on StudentSupportDirect website

	All students	
	November'04	**November'05**
Base	(607)	(891)
Yes	13%	14%
No	84%	79%
Can't remember	3%	7%

Of those that used it, most found it helpful. Just under a half found it either extremely or very helpful, while a further 33% found it quite helpful. 10% found the site not very or not at all helpful.

Approximately a third of students and one in six parents used the ID number and PIN to check their application status (table 5.5). A further third of students and quarter of parents recalled receiving the ID number and PIN but didn't bother checking their application status.

Table 5.5 Usage of ID Number/PIN for checking application status

	Students	**Parents**
Base	(891)	(306)
Received and used	33%	17%
Received, not used	34%	23%
Not received	19%	31%
Can't remember	12%	27%

As can be seen in table 5.6, those that used the ID number/PIN to check their application status generally found it helpful.

Table 5.6 Helpfulness of being able to check application status

	Students	**Parents**
Base	(891)	(306)
Extremely helpful	10%	24%
Very helpful	43%	35%
Quite helpful	32%	22%
Not very helpful	6%	1%
Not at all helpful	7%	3%
Can’t remember	2%	15%

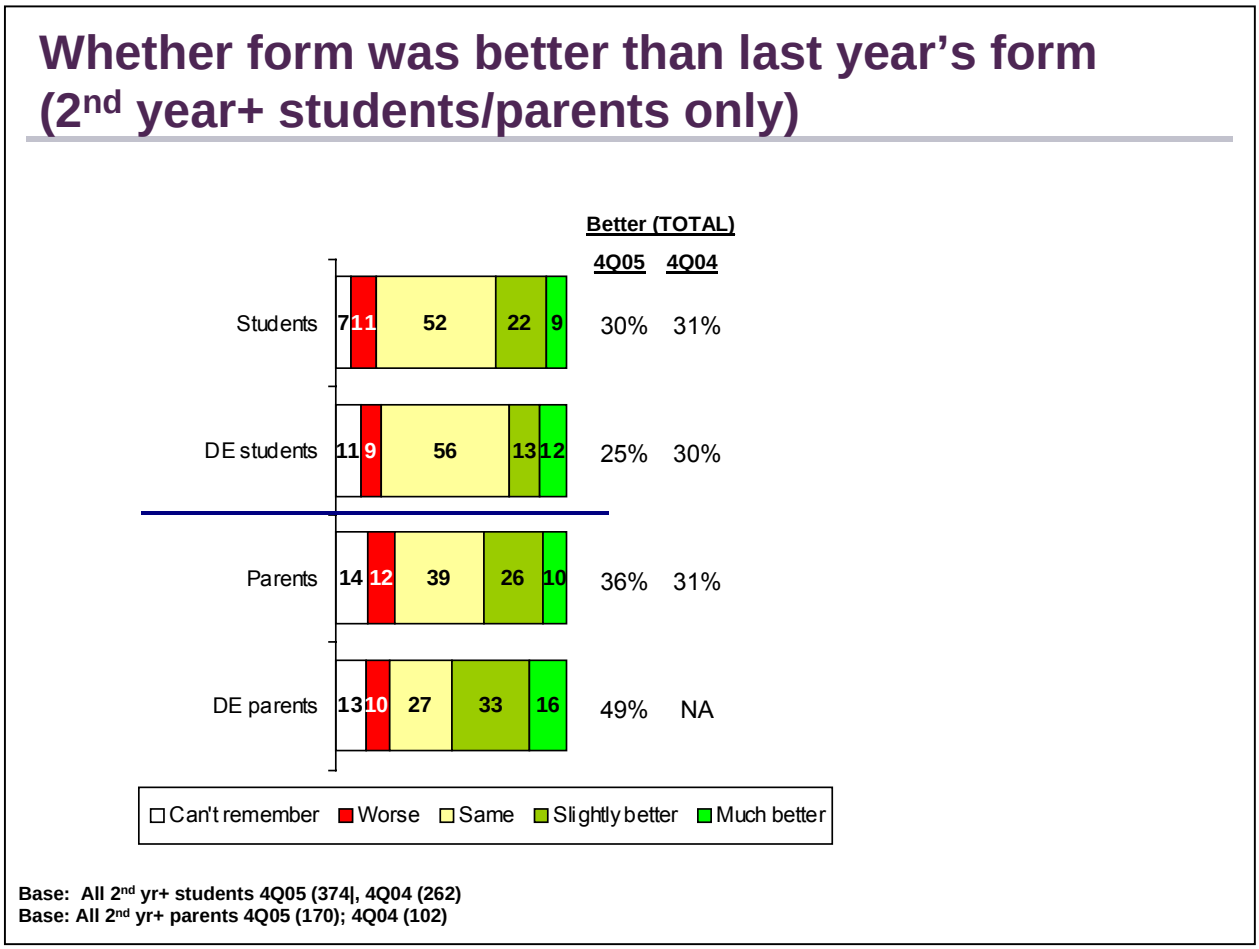
c) How the form compares with last year's form

All students and parents of students in their second year or above were asked how they felt the form from 2005 compared with the form from 2004.

Opinions were generally positive (chart 5.7). Approximately a third of 2nd year+ students 30% and parents 36% felt the form was either much better or slightly better than the form/s, while 11% and 12% respectively thought it was worse. 52% of students and 39% of parents felt the form was 'the same' as last year's.

Perhaps the key groups are 2nd year students and parents as many of these would hopefully have been sent pre-populated forms. 36% of 2nd years students and 35% of 2nd years parents felt the form was better than that in 2004.

Chart 5.7 Whether form was better than last year's form



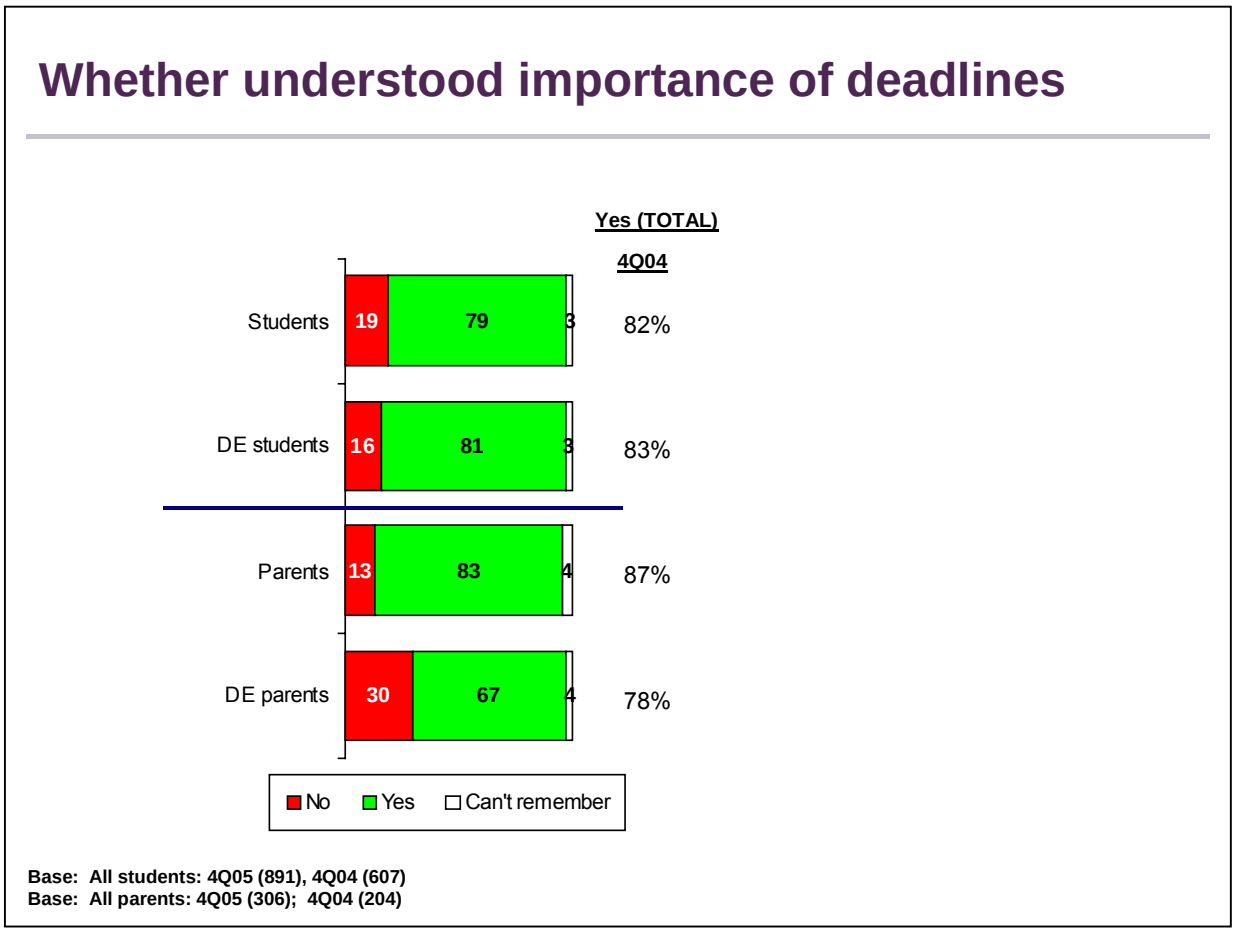
Just under a third 31% of parents with student children in their 2nd year or higher said they were exempt from having to provide detailed information because their income was under a certain threshold. 41% said they were not exempt, while 28% couldn't remember.

Of those exempt, 75% thought the exemptions were made clear to them, 12% thought they were unclear, while 13% couldn't remember. Most parents welcomed the exemptions with 78% saying the exemptions were useful. However, a significant minority 17% were concerned about not providing detailed information.

d) Importance of deadlines

As shown in chart 5.8, approximately four-fifths of students (79%) and parents (83%) said they understood the importance of deadlines when submitting their application form. 19% of students and 13% of parents said they were not aware of the importance.

Chart 5.8 Whether understood the importance of application form return deadlines



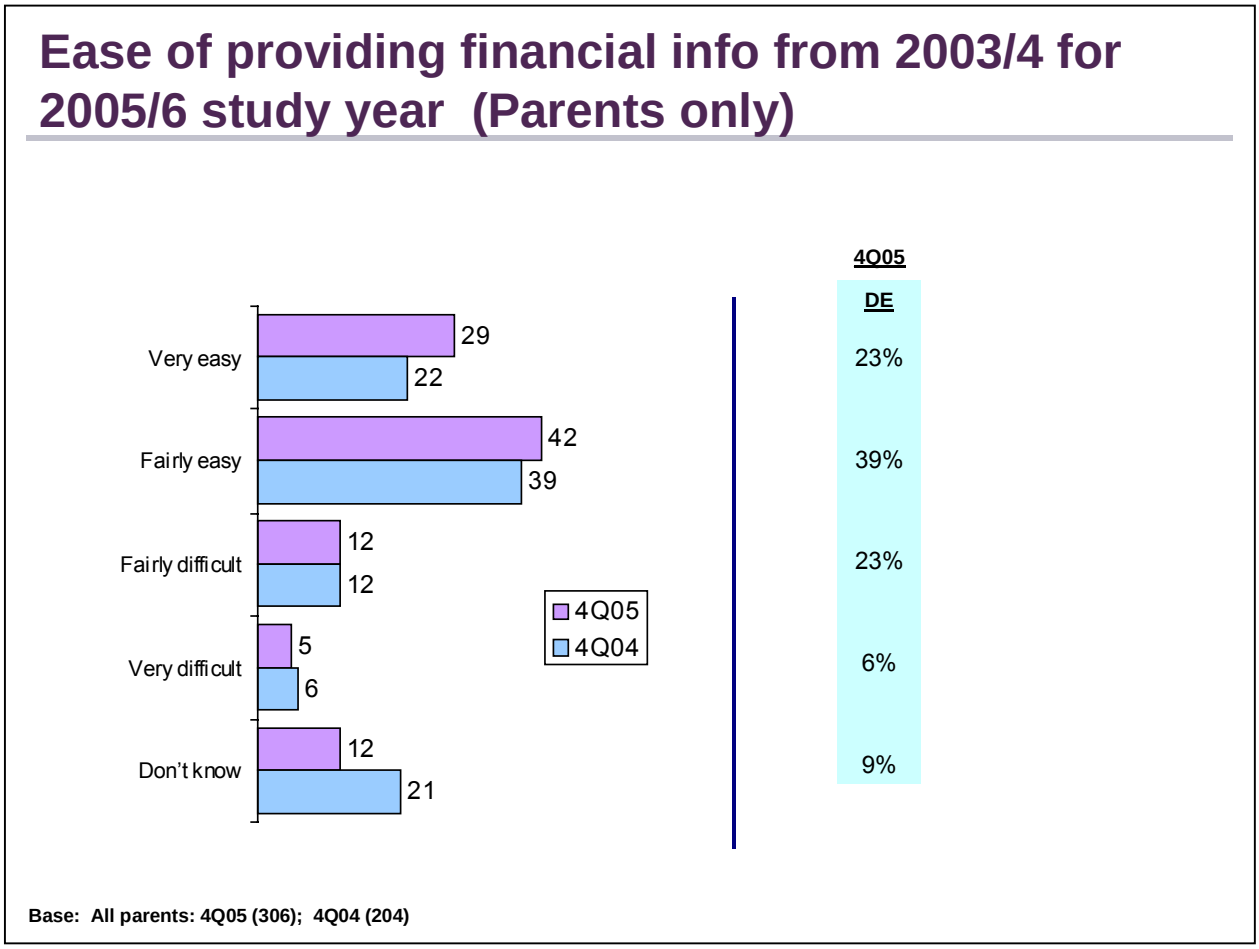
e) Possible changes in the future

Some possible changes to the application process were discussed with students and parents to see whether they would be worth pursuing in the future.

Parents were asked whether they would have found it easy to provide financial information from 2003/4 (rather than 2004/5) for the study year 2005/6. As can be seen in chart 5.9, responses were mixed. Just over two-thirds 71% thought it would either be very or fairly easy, while just under one in five 17% thought it would be difficult. Over one in eight 12% didn't know.

Although sample sizes are low, there is no evidence that self-employed parents would find this any easier/harder than other parents.

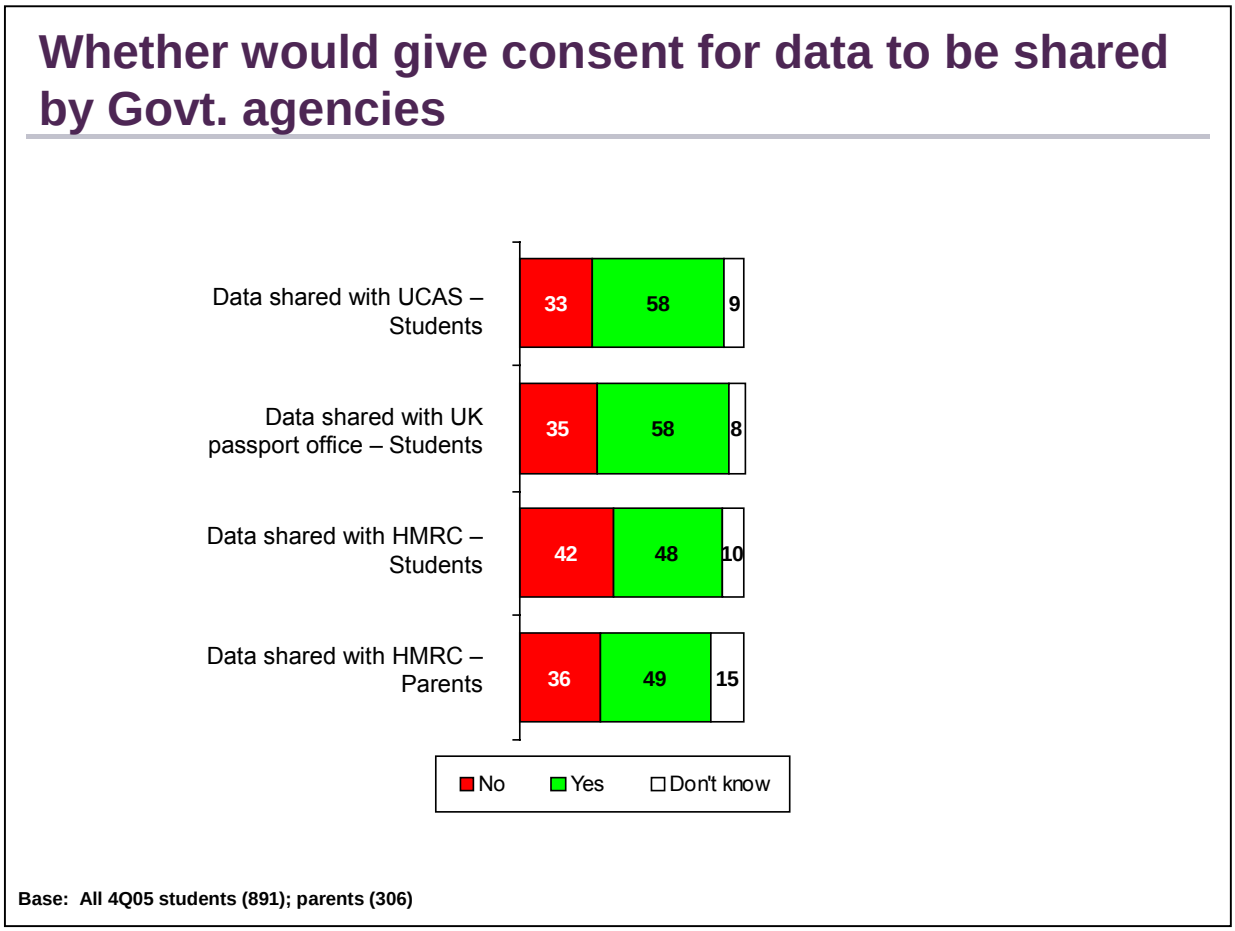
Chart 5.9 Ease of providing financial information from 2003/4 for 2005/6 study year (Parents *only)*



Another option put forward to both students and parents was whether they would be in favour of giving consent for personal information held by other Government departments to be shared, in order to reduce the amount of information and evidence that they would need to supply.

Again, views were mixed. Approximately a half of students and parents would be happy sharing data in a number of circumstances.

Chart 5.10 Giving permission to obtain personal information



f) Opinion of Interactive application forms

In 2005 (unlike in 2004) students and parents were able to complete their application form online.

As demonstrated in chart 5.11 overleaf, 16% of students and parents claimed to have completed the form online. In reality, we know that only around 5% completed the form online and we know the sample of students and parents is reflective of students and parents in England and Wales. Therefore we have to assume that some students and parents:

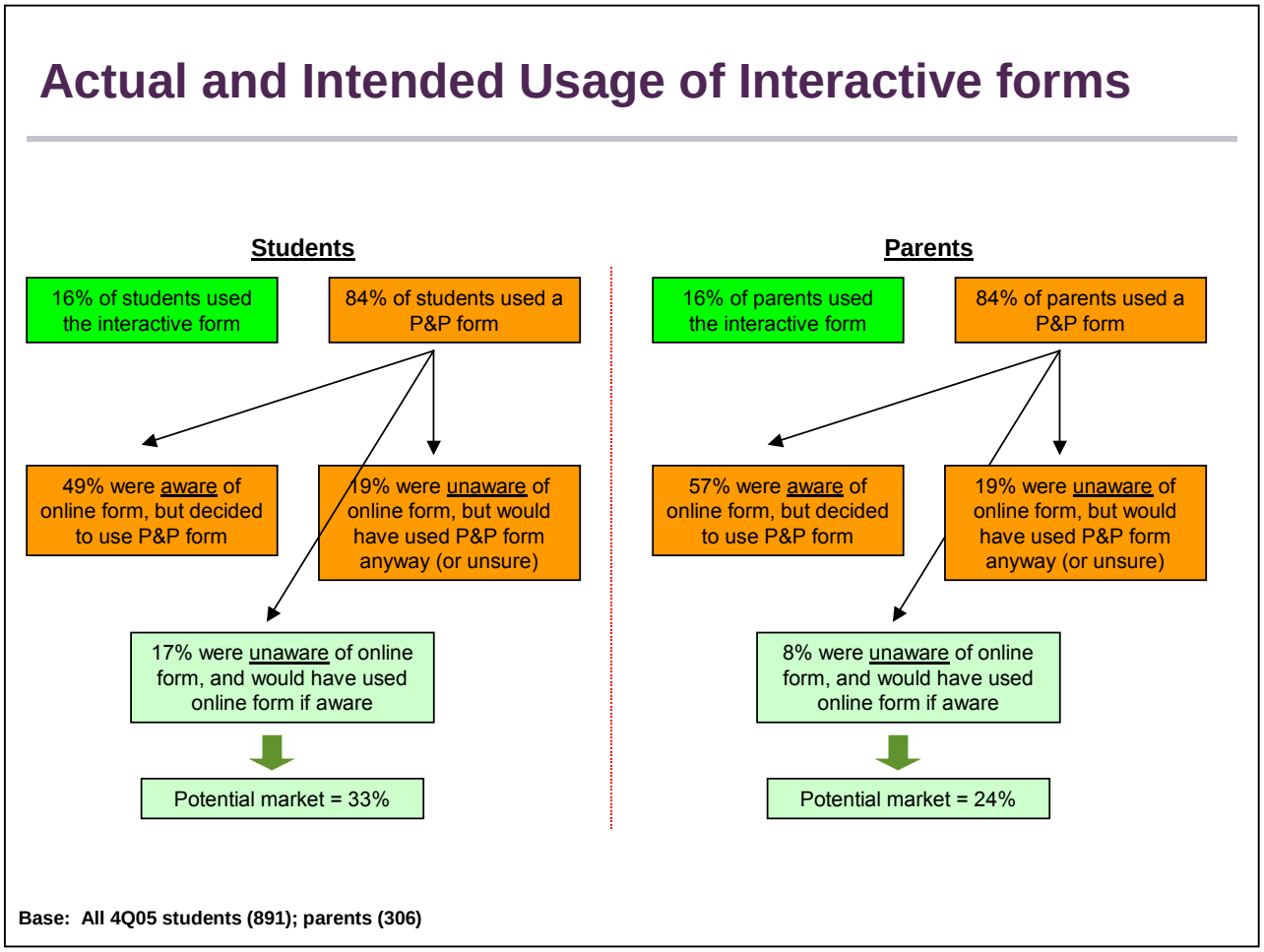
1. May be over-claiming i.e. they may have sourced information online but didn't actually complete the form online

2. Have started the form online but given up and completed the form on paper

In addition, from some of the follow-up in-depth interviews it was clear that people were confusing the online form with checking their application status online.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is when combining those students and parents who claimed they completed the form online with those who were unaware that there was an online form, but claim they would have used it had they known. By combining these two groups, we can see what is the potential market if awareness of the online form were 100%. In total, a third of students and a quarter of parents fell into one of these two categories.

Chart 5.11 Actual and Intended usage of Interactive forms

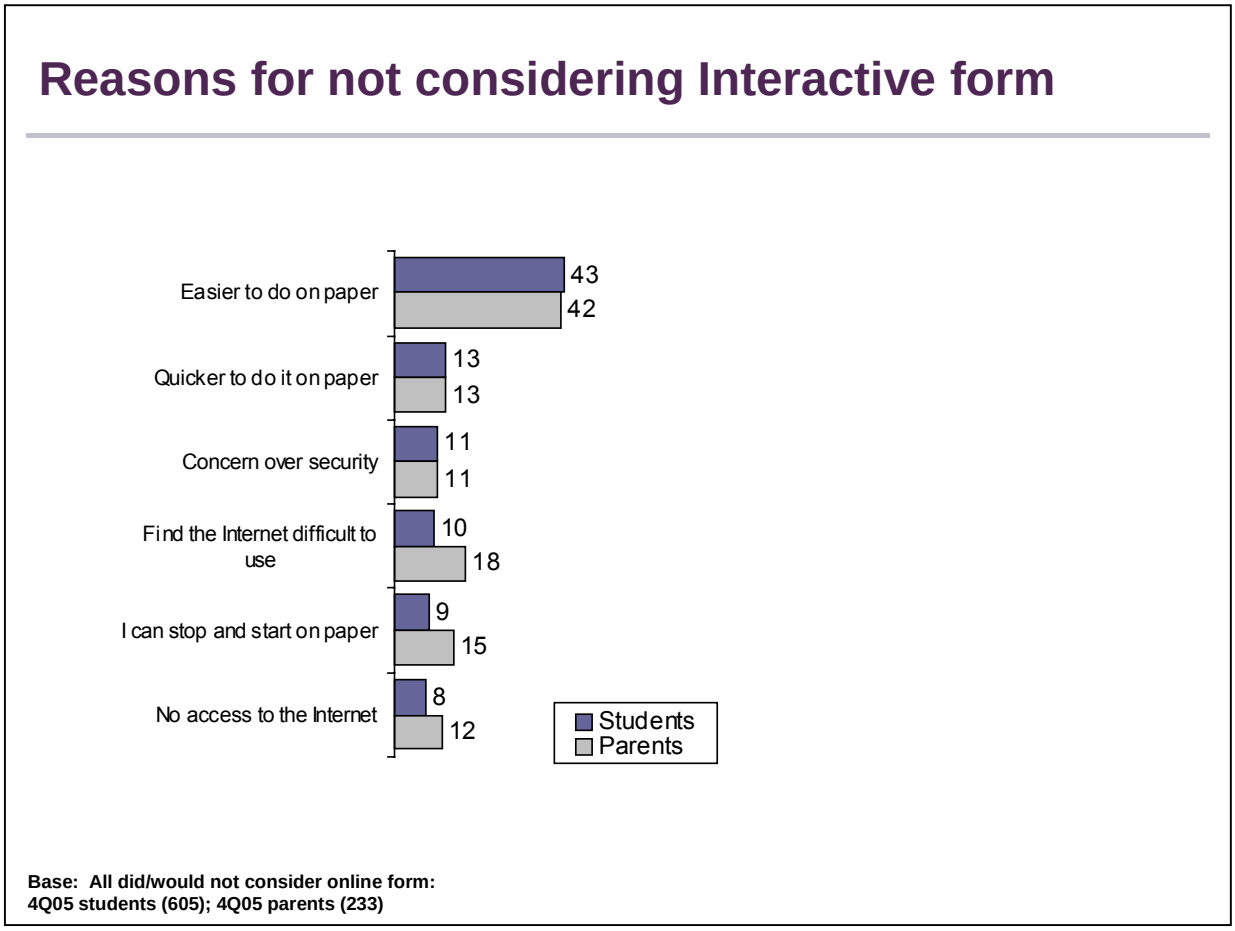


Those that would not consider using interactive forms in the future were asked reasons for non-consideration. This question was unprompted and answers were put into 'like' codes once interviewing was completed.

As demonstrated in chart 5.12, the primary reason for not considering interactive forms in the future is a general feeling that it is an easier process when completing on paper. This factor was spontaneously cited by 43% of students and 42% of parents.

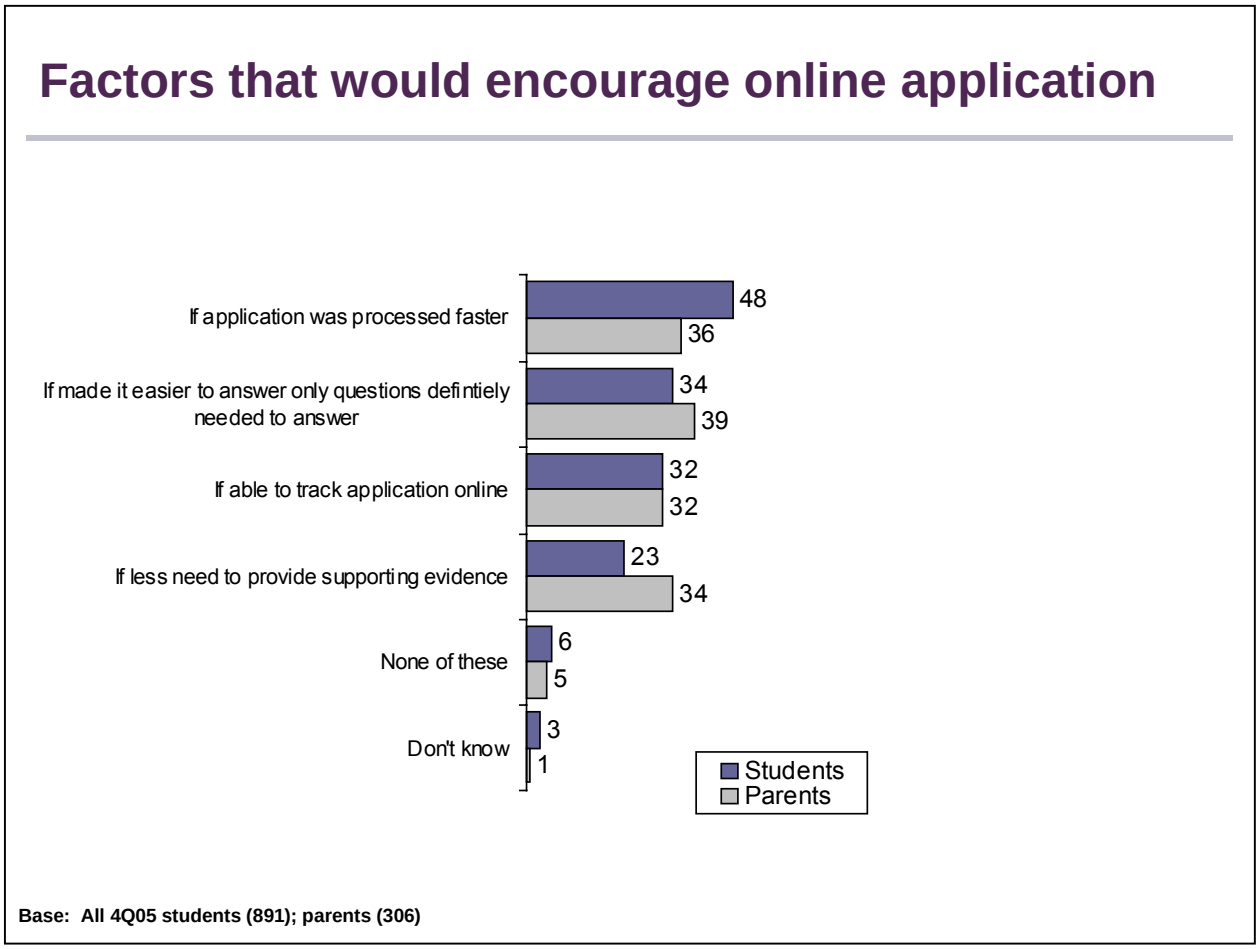
Other factors mentioned by at least 10% of students and parents were a feeling that it would be quicker to complete on paper, concerns over security and generally finding the Internet difficult to use (more an issue for parents than students). 12% of parents who would not consider using an online form mentioned a lack of access to the Internet as a reason.

Chart 5.12 Reasons for not considering interactive form



As can be seen in chart 5.13, if it could be demonstrated that online applications were processed faster, or it made it easier to only answer the questions that definitely needed to be answered, or the application status could be tracked online and there was less need to provide supporting evidence, these factors would encourage between a quarter and a half to use an online form.

Chart 5.13 Factors that would encourage online application



g) Findings from the qualitative research

In the main survey, 16% of both students and parents claimed to have applied using an online interactive application form. In reality we know this figure is much closer to 5%. One of the objectives of the in-depth interviews therefore was to understand why this figure was inflated. Two online students and one online parent were included in the in-depth interviews, but unfortunately these interviews did not help explain why the overall figure was high. All three confirmed that they had completed the form online (from start to finish). However, from conducting the interviews generally we did find some confusion existed between online applications and being able to check the application status online. It is therefore possible that some students and parents (in the main survey) incorrectly said they had completed the form online (when in fact they had completed it on paper but checked the status online). This may explain why we ended up with a figure of 16% and something we would look to correct when researching 2006/7 applicants.

Generally speaking the respondents we interviewed from the in-depth interviews re-iterated a lot of the issues that were identified in the end-to-end review:

- The application form was generally okay but was felt to be overly long. This was especially true of 'standard' applicants where there were a number of questions / sections not relevant to them (making the form feel longer than it really was)
- Sometimes the terminology was confusing e.g. non-income assessed, 'dependent' etc
- The routing wasn't always obvious or consistent e.g. should I leave that question blank or put 'not applicable'.

On average, most 1st year students and parents took up to 2 hours to complete the form (and this would often be done in 2-3 sittings over a period of days).

Those completing the form online tended to find the form easier to complete, although they felt the need to provide supporting evidence and the need to sign the form meant the process wasn't 'really online'. One disadvantage of the online form is that it's harder to "see ahead". Paper applicants could sift quickly through the form to see what information they would need to fill out the whole form, while online applicants didn't have this luxury (although some online applicants from the end-to-end review overcame this problem by ensuring they had a paper form to hand while they completed the form online).

The improvements online applicants would like to see are:

- Ensure questionnaire is fully routed i.e. online applicants only want to be shown the questions they have to answer (evidence that this isn't always happening)
- Ensure whole process is online (online signature and no need to provide supporting evidence – possibly offer applicants the option for information to be collected directly

from HMRC/UCAS/Passport Office etc). Important to note though that some did quite like having to sign the form (extra security)

When asked whether they would prefer Local Authorities, central Government or the university/college to process applications, most had no preference, however:

- A few would prefer this to be handled by the Local Authorities (especially those who had a good experience when filling out the form with help from their LEA)
- A couple preferred the university/college to process it (one point of contact before going to university/college i.e. can discuss tuition fees, student loan payments and course/living arrangements in one go)
- One preferred the idea of the DfES processing applications as they thought it would be more efficient to carry this out centrally.

h) Notes / Booklets referred to when completing the forms

When completing the forms, both students and parents had access to accompanying notes and four separate booklets: the general 'financial support' booklet and 'guide to terms and conditions' booklet, and the more specific 'childcare grant' booklet and 'bridging the gap' booklet. In addition, another source of information were Government websites e.g. the DfES website, Student Finance Direct and Directgov.

As can be seen in chart 5.14, usage of the notes and booklets was varied. An increasing proportion of students (70% up from 61% in 2004 but close to 71% in November 2003) referred to the **accompanying notes**. Unlike students, the proportion of parents (69%) referring to the accompanying notes has not changed significantly.

The **'financial support' booklet** was referred to by under a half of students (41%) and parents (47% down from 57%).

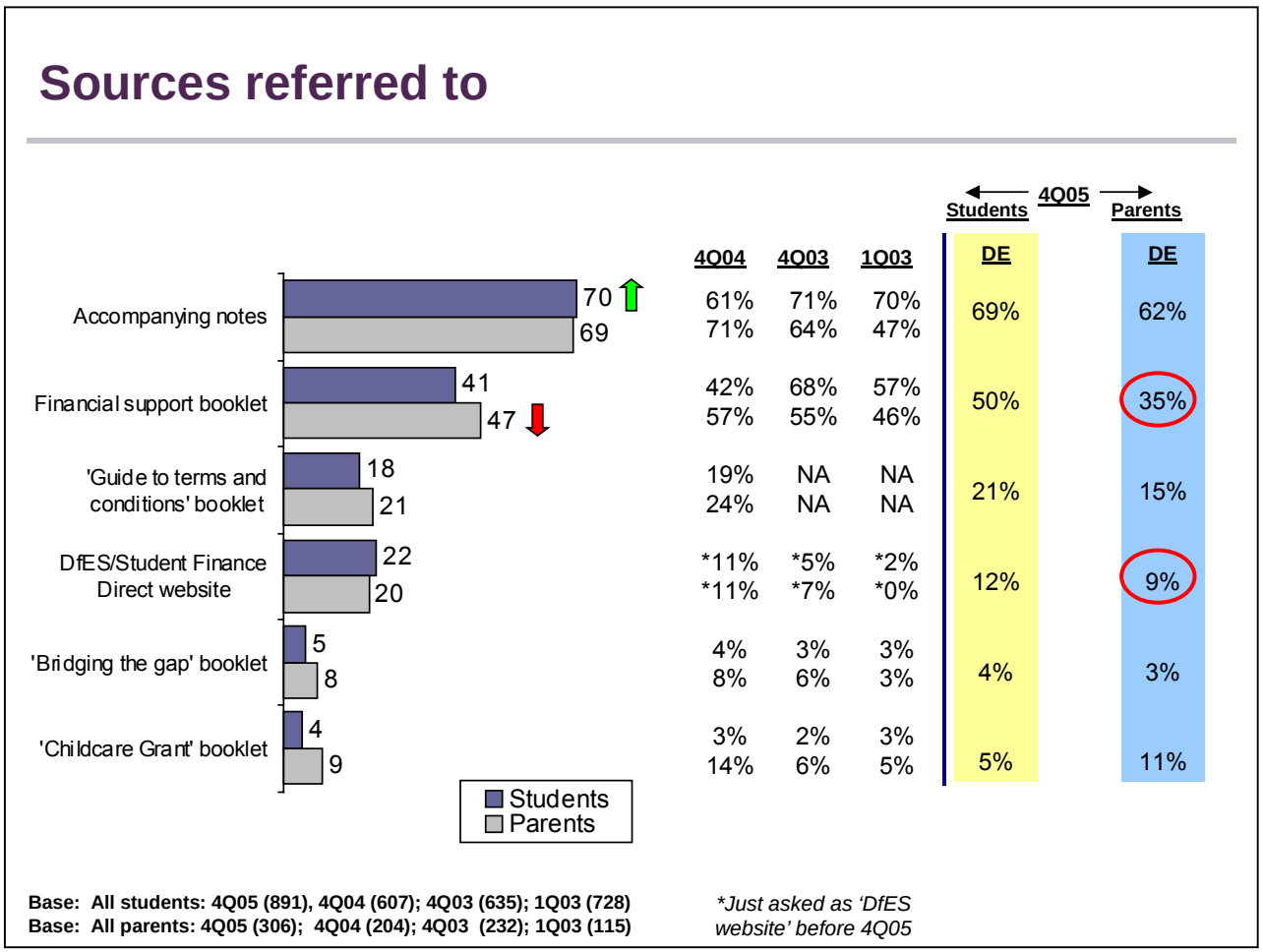
Approximately one in five students (18%) and one in four parents (21%) referred to the **'guide to terms and conditions' booklet**.

A similar proportion of students (22%) and parents (21%) accessed a **Government website** such as the DfES website, the Student Finance Direct website or Directgov for information when completing the application form. In previous waves, respondents were only asked about the DfES website and so we can't be sure if there has been an increase in website usage, although this is likely (as usage of websites is increasing all the time).

Due to their specific nature, reference to the **'childcare grant' booklet** and the '**bridging the gap' booklet** was low. 5% of students and 8% of parents referred to the 'bridging the gap' booklet while 4% of students and 9% of parents referred to the 'childcare grant' booklet.

There were few differences by social grade for either students or parents in terms of usage of the notes, booklets or website, although DE parents are less likely to access the 'financial support' booklet (36%) or a Government website (9%) when completing the application form.

Chart 5.14 Notes / Booklets referred to when completing the forms



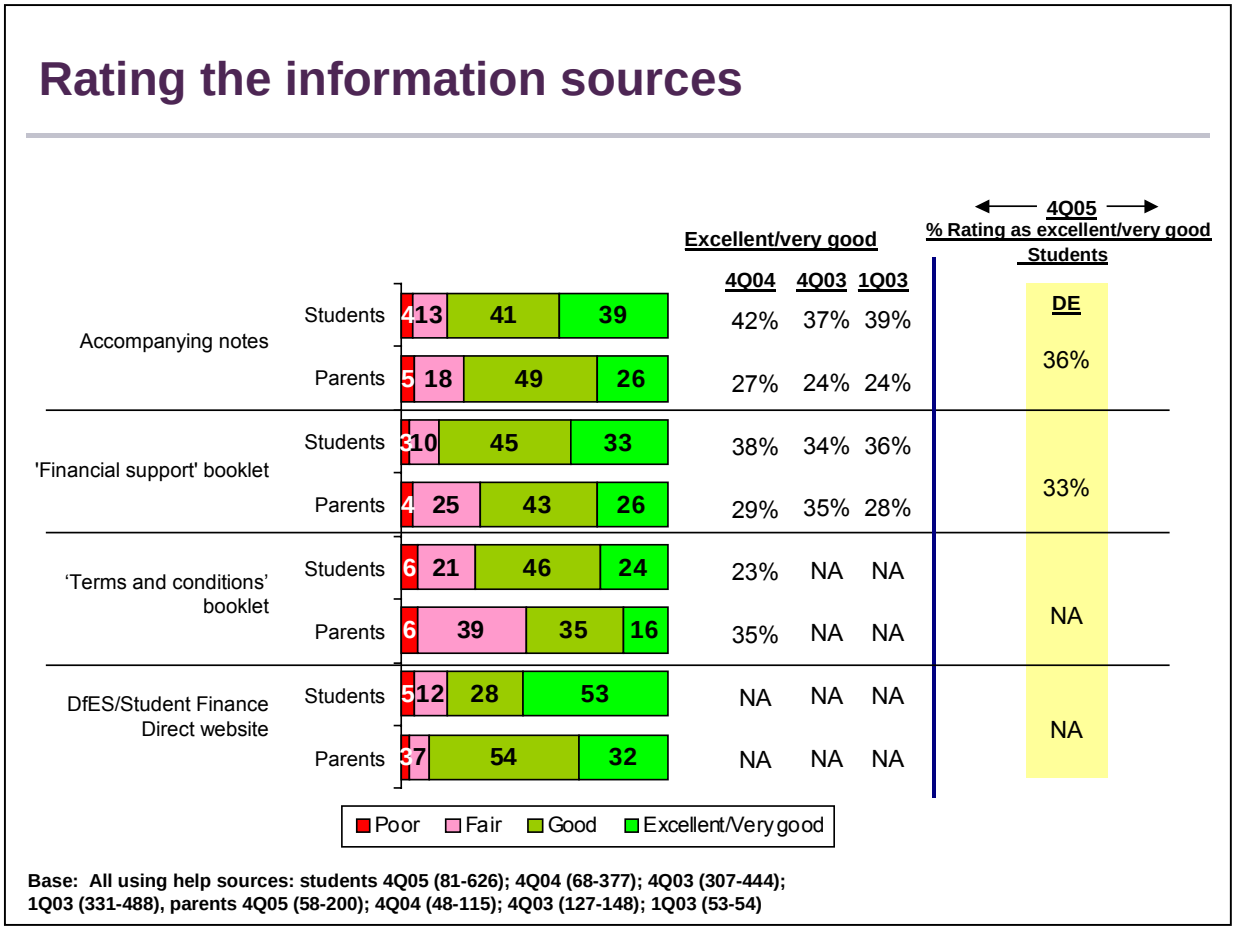
Both students and parents who had used the notes and booklets, were then asked how they rated each source (meaning, in some cases, that sample sizes are low and therefore the results need to be treated with caution).

Not surprisingly, ratings for the accompanying notes and 'financial support' booklet were more positive than the ratings for the forms themselves. As shown in chart 5.15, two in five students rated the accompanying notes as excellent or very good (39%) and a third gave the same rating for the 'financial support' booklet (33%). A quarter rated the 'terms and conditions' booklet as excellent or very good (although a further 46% rated it as 'good' - this type of information source is unlikely to receive very positive ratings). A half rated the websites as excellent or very good, and only 5% rated it as poor (this is a very positive score i.e. if someone visits the site and cannot find what they are looking for, they are likely to rate it negatively – meaning people generally probably found what they were looking for).

Ratings among parents were generally less positive. About a quarter of parents rated the accompanying notes and the 'financial support' booklet as excellent or very good, while one in six rated the 'terms and conditions' booklet as excellent or very good.

There were no differences by social grade among students.

Chart 5.15 Rating the information sources



Base: All using help sources: students 4Q05 (81-626); 4Q04 (68-377); 4Q03 (307-444); 1Q03 (331-488), parents 4Q05 (58-200); 4Q04 (48-115); 4Q03 (127-148); 1Q03 (53-54)

For the follow up in-depth interviews, it was clear that, in the main, the *Financial Support booklet* was liked by both students and parents. It was felt to be helpful and well laid out (especially the use of boxes and different colours for each section).

In particular, the ‘what financial help is available’ section was seen to be particularly useful in that it helped people understand the level of tuition fee/HE grant support they might hope to receive (and therefore meant the notification letter was less of an issue if it was late).

One criticism of the booklet (among a few) was that it was overly long and contained too much ‘non-standard’ information.

6 Seeking help

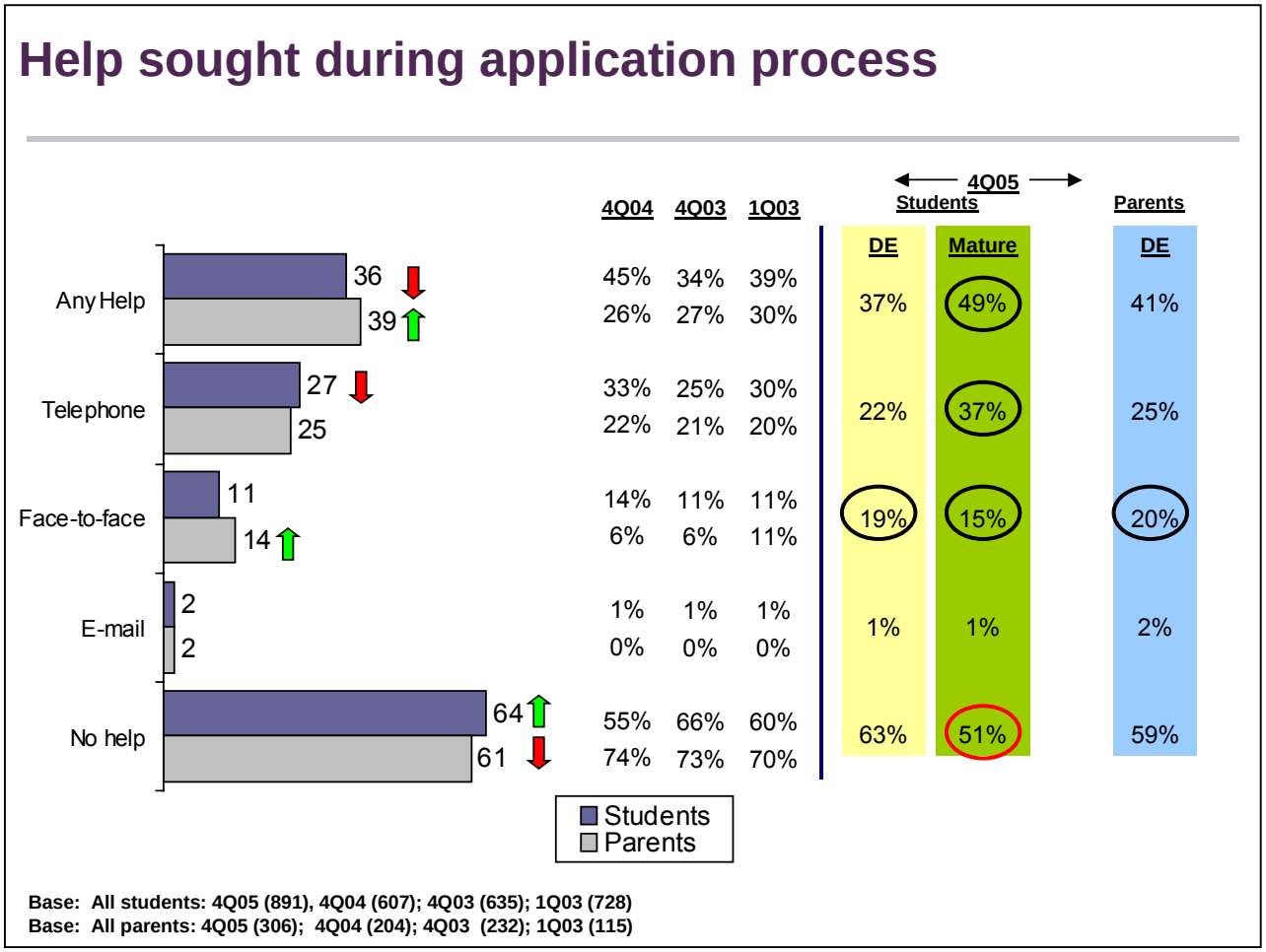
Both students and parents were asked questions relating to any help they may have sought during the application process, in terms of whether they sought help, who they contacted and how they rated the help that they received.

a) Help sought during the application process

A decreasing number of students 36% (down from 45% in November 2004 but similar to 2003) but an increasing proportion of parents (39% up from 26%) sought help during the application process (chart 6.1). For those seeking help, this tended to be by telephone (students - 27% down from 33% in November 2004; and parents - 25%) rather than face-to-face help (11% for students and 14% parents – up from 6%).

Mature students were more likely than non-mature students to have sought help (probably because this group would not have been helped by a school). DE students and parents were more likely to have sought face-to-face help.

Chart 6.1 Help sought during the application process

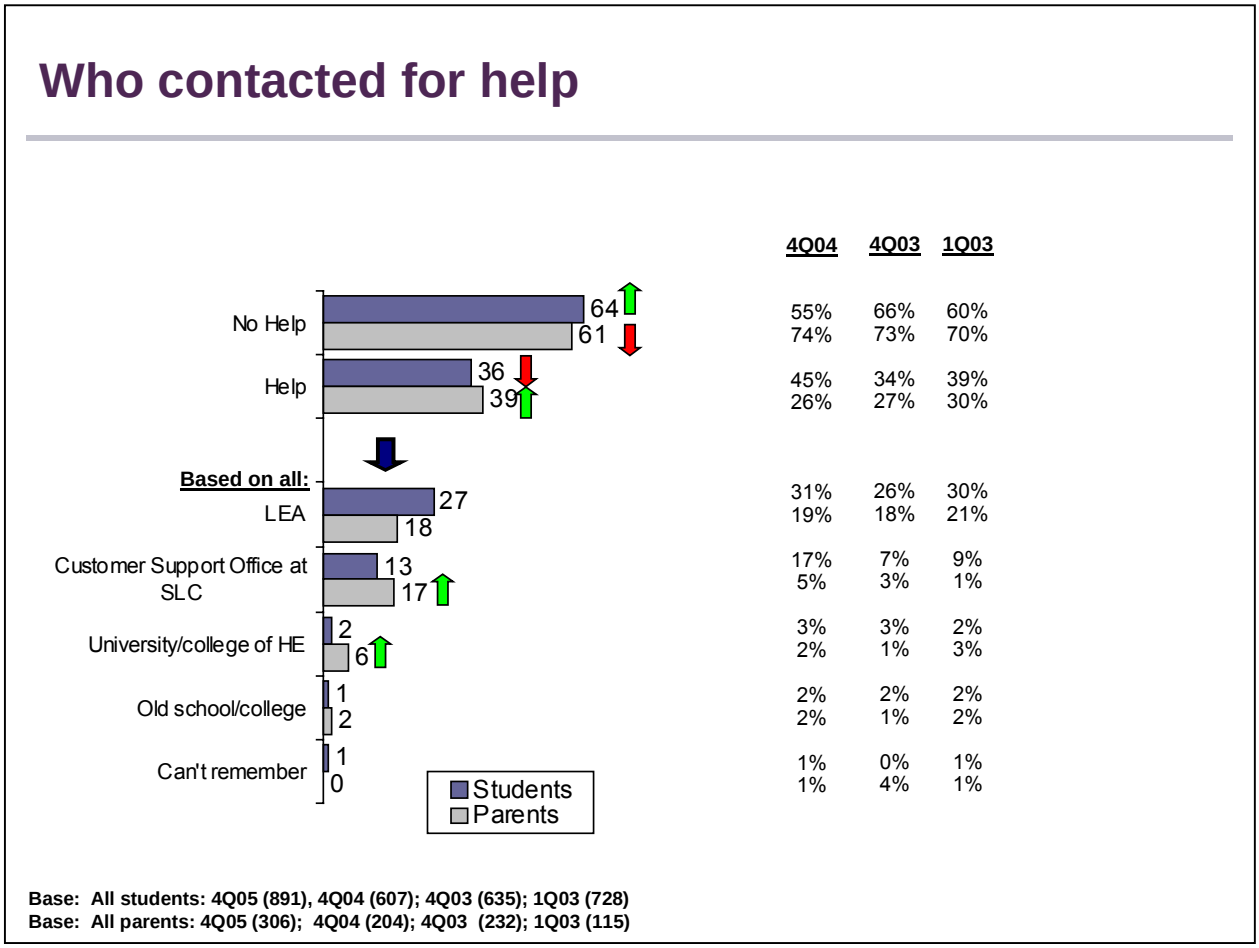


Base: All students: 4Q05 (891), 4Q04 (607); 4Q03 (635); 1Q03 (728)
Base: All parents: 4Q05 (306); 4Q04 (204); 4Q03 (232); 1Q03 (115)

As in previous waves, in most cases LEAs were contacted when students and parents needed help (as shown in chart 6.2). However, there has been a large shift in the proportion of parents seeking help from the Student Loans Company.

27% of students and 18% of parents contacted their **LEA**, while 13% of students and 17% of parents contacted the **Student Loans Company** (a huge increase on the 5% using this help source in November 2004).

Chart 6.2 Who contacted for help



b) Rating of help received

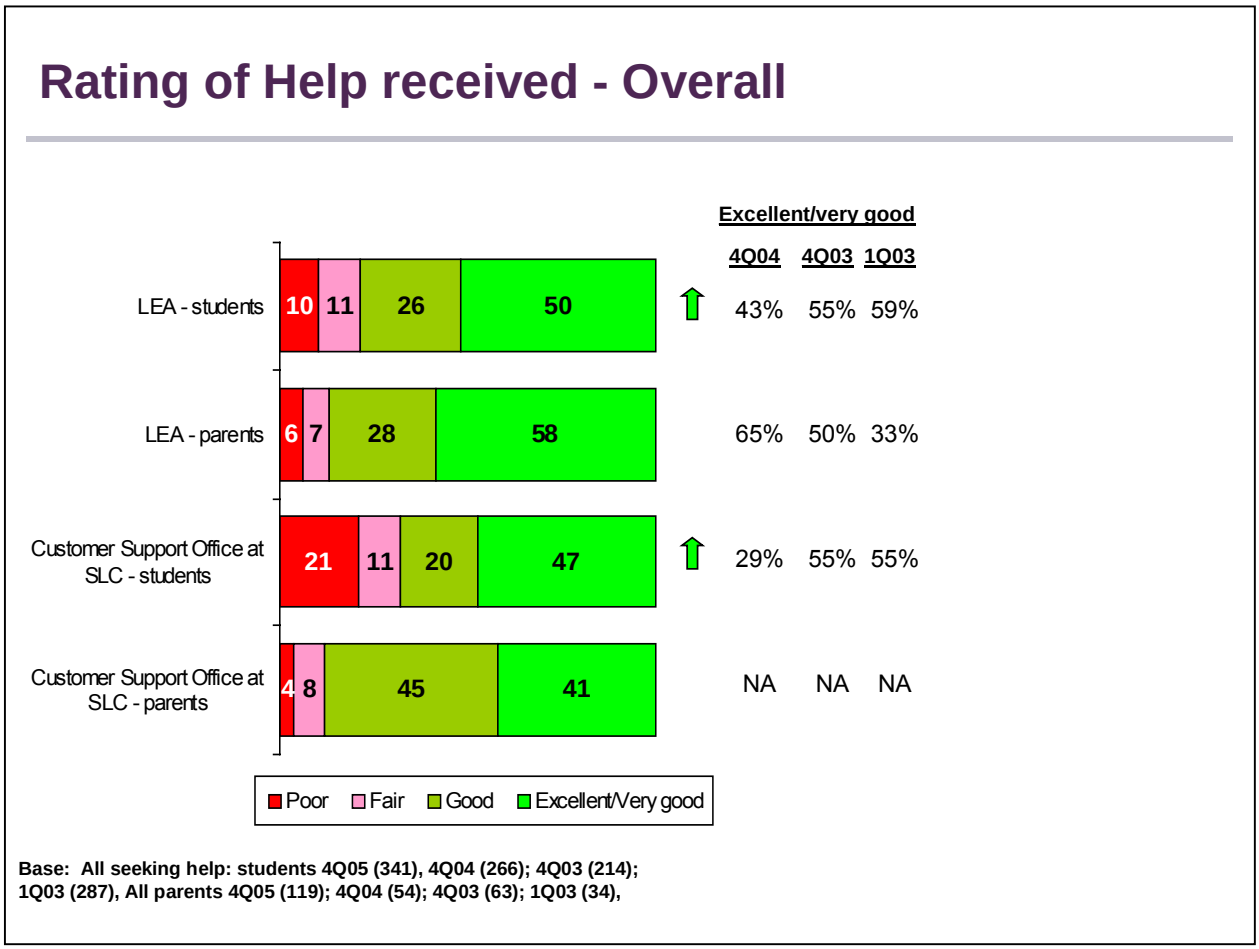
There were some major differences from 2004 with students rating the help they received from their LEA more positively than in 2004 (and somewhat back to 2003 levels). In 2004, a number of students had experienced problems with their student loan payments and this would have impacted on the SLC scores. It's possible that even if LEA help had not deteriorated in reality, perceptions may have worsened due to poor experiences with the SLC. Encouragingly, these issues seem to have been resolved although there may still be a hangover effect meaning scores are still slightly lower than 2003 scores.

50% of students who contacted their **LEA** for help rated that help as excellent or very good (compared with 43% in 2004 and 55% in November 2003), with 10% rating it as 'poor' (down from 13% in 2004 but still up from 5% in November 2003).

Parent scores have not changed significantly with 58% rating the help from their LEA as very good or excellent and 6% as poor. (Please note that the sample size for parents using their LEA is low and therefore the results need to be treated with caution).

Satisfaction among students with the **Student Loans Company** has increased considerably, with 47% rating the help as very good or excellent (up from 29% but still down from 55% in November 2003). However, 21% still rated the help as poor (14% in 2003 and only 2% in November 2003).

Chart 6.3 Overall rating of help received



The key reasons mentioned for dissatisfaction among the small number of students and parents who rated the help as fair or poor were similar to those issues raised in previous waves:

- Unhelpful advice
- Help not available at convenient times
- Inconsistent advice

When looking at specific areas of help, the scores are again more positive for students (chart 6.4) than in 2004 and generally unchanged for parents (chart 6.5). Approximately a half of students rate the help from their LEA as excellent or very good for 'helpfulness of the person answering your query' (51%), 'the speed of getting an answer to your query' (47% up from 37%) and 'the tone of the reply' (53% down from 43%). Ratings among parents (chart 6,5) were similar with approximately a half awarding excellent or very good scores for the same measures.

Chart 6.4 Rating of help received – LEA (Students)

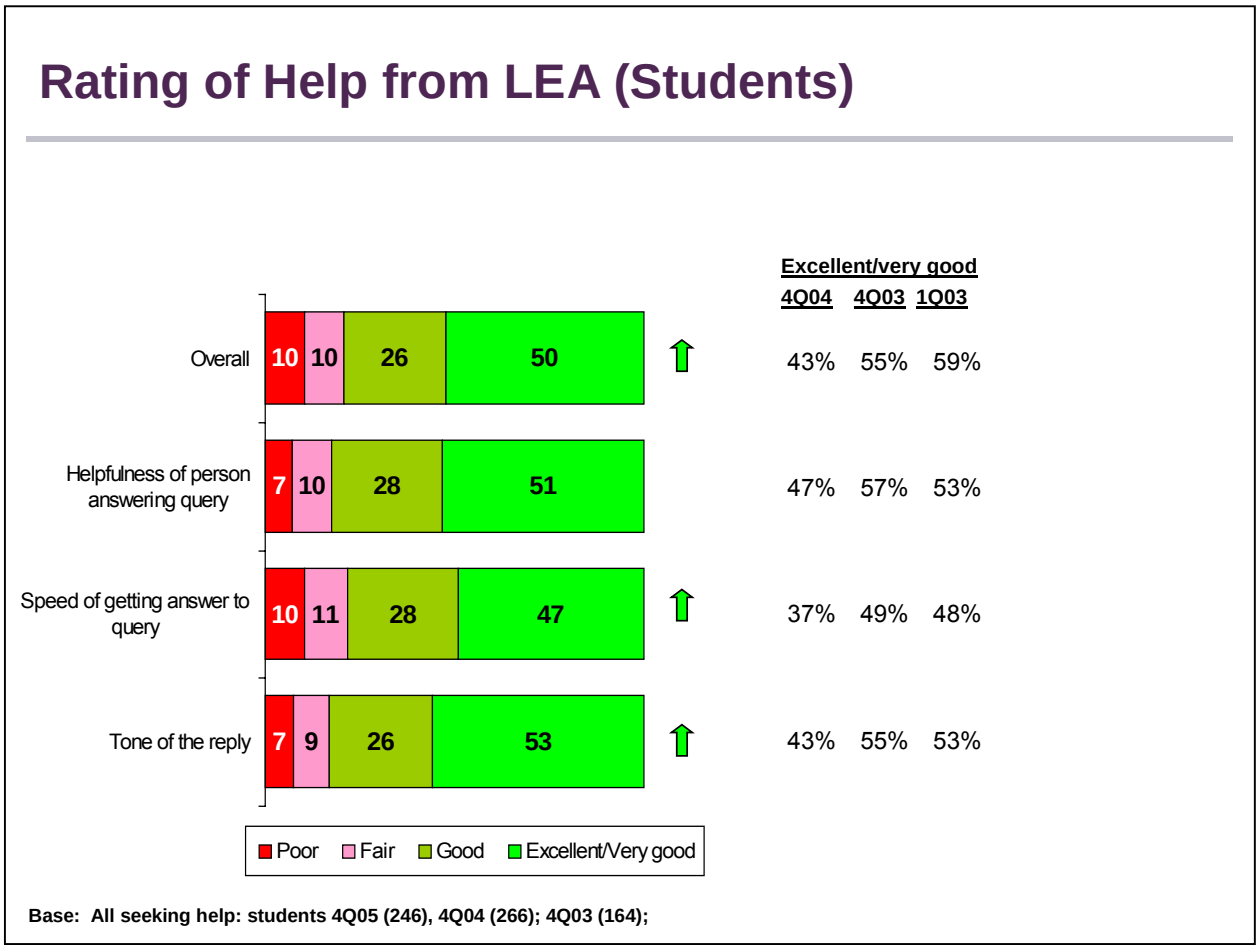
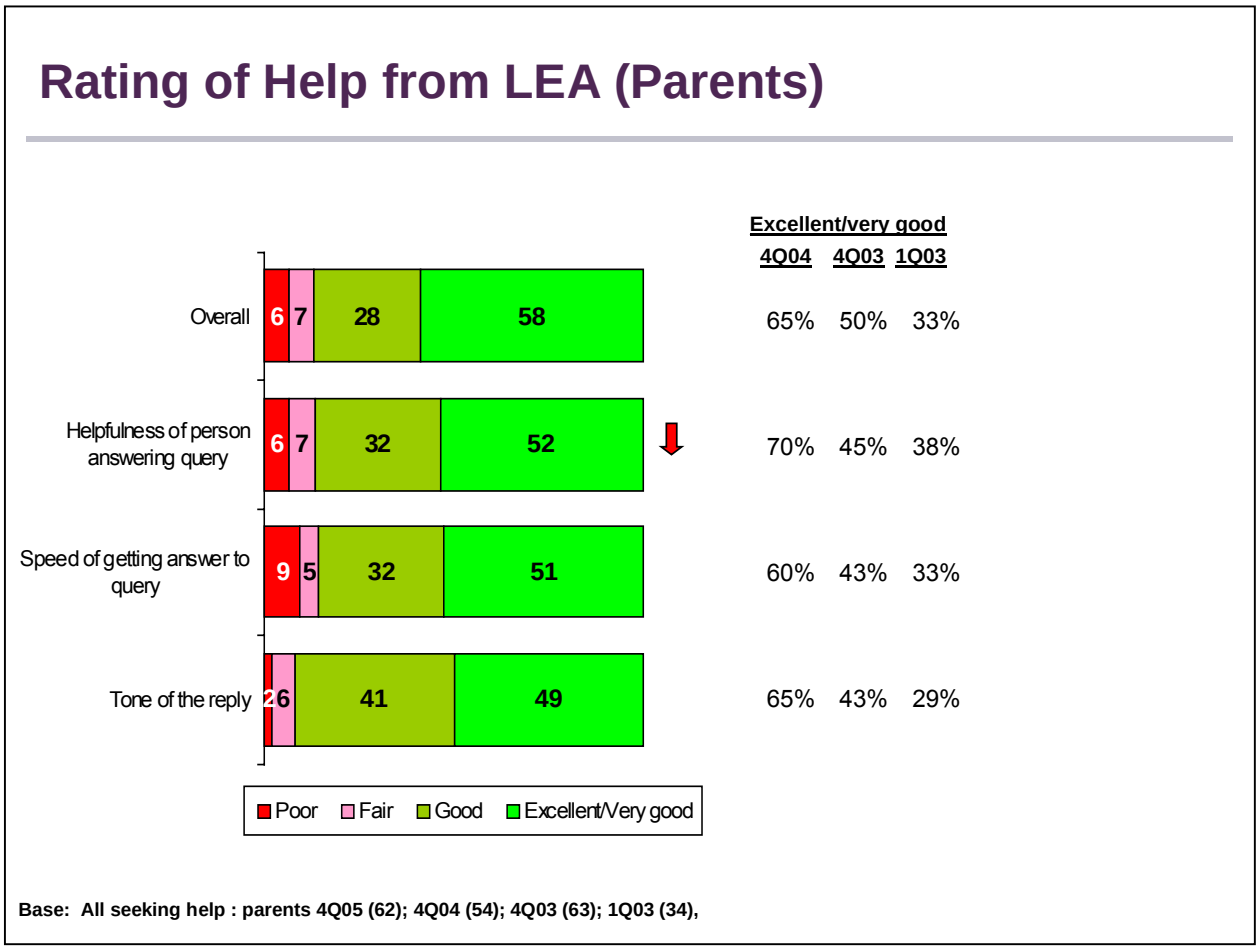


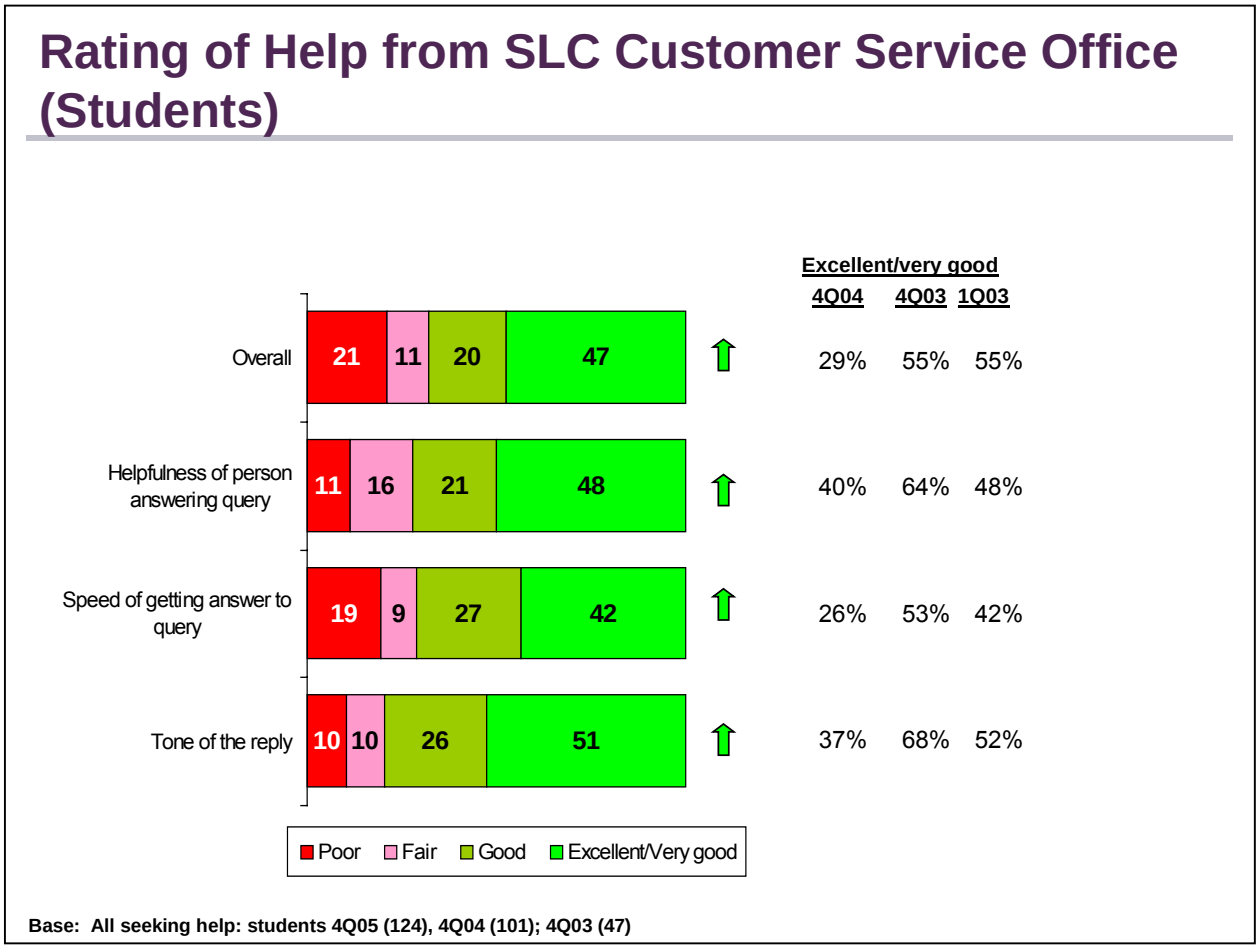
Chart 6.5 Rating of help received – LEA (Parents)



As with the overall ratings, specific help ratings for the Student Loans Company among students have improved considerably among many, but there is still a large number rating different aspects of service as 'poor' (chart 6.6). Between 42-51% of students rate the help from their Student Loans Company as excellent or very good for 'helpfulness of the person answering your query', 'the speed of getting an answer to your query' and 'the tone of the reply' (up from between 26-40% in 2004). However, 19% rated the speed of getting an answer to a query as poor (similar to the 22% in November 2004).

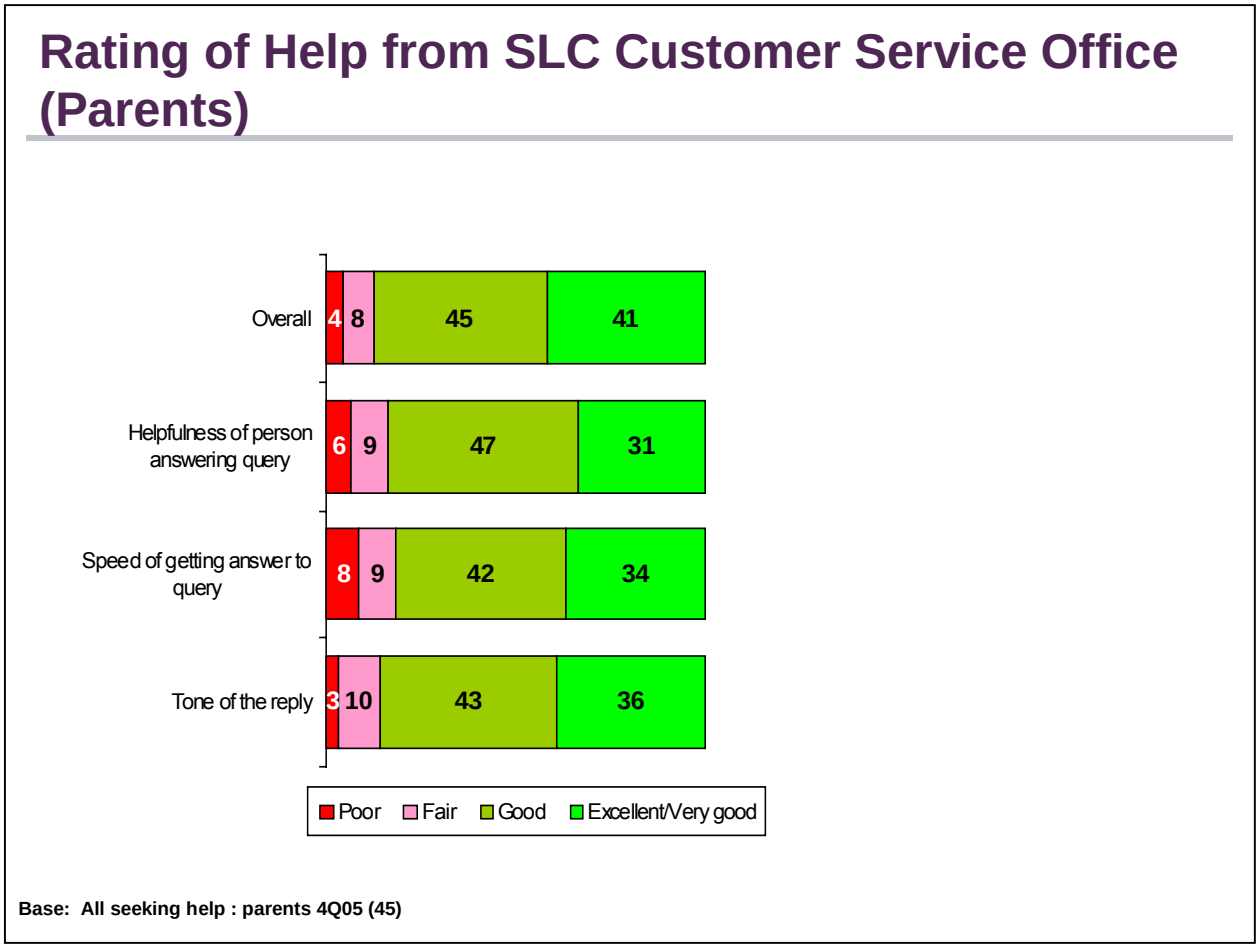
Sample sizes were too small to look at any sub-group analysis.

Chart 6.6 Rating of help received – SLC (Students)



This was the first year we were able to look at parent ratings for the Student Loans Company due to increased usage and therefore an increased sample size. Ratings among parents (chart 6.7) were not as high as those for students (although importantly fewer gave poor ratings). Approximately a third awarded excellent or very good ratings for 'helpfulness of the person answering your query', 'the speed of getting an answer to your query' and 'the tone of the reply'.

Chart 6.7 Rating of help received – SLC (Parents)



7 Receiving funds

Students were asked a number of questions relating to receiving funds including the level of support they were receiving, whether that met original expectations and whether they had experienced any problems. Due to a lack of involvement at this stage, parents were not asked questions relating to problems experienced when receiving funds.

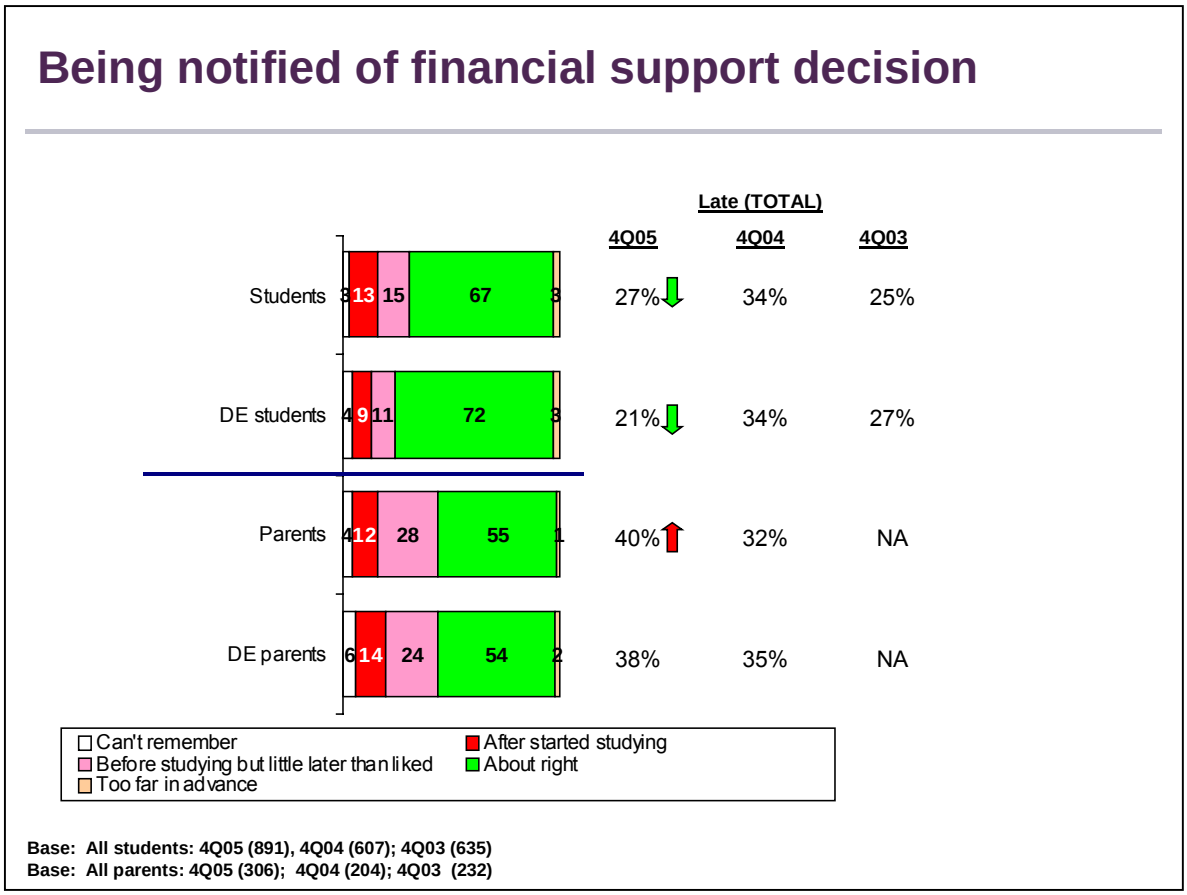
a) Being notified of financial support decision

Both students and parents were asked whether they felt they had been told about the financial support they would receive too far in advance, about the right time or too late before starting at university/college.

As shown in chart 7.1, two-thirds of students 67% felt they received a decision about the right amount of time before studying, slightly higher than the proportion of parents feeling this way (55% similar to the 59% in November 2004 but still up from the 43% in November 2003). 15% of students and 28% of parents (up from 16% in November 2004 but similar to the 27% in November 2003) learned of the amount later than they would have liked, while a further 13% and 12% respectively found out after the course started.

There were no differences by social grade or other key sub-groups.

Chart 7.1 Being notified of financial support decision



b) Financial support currently receiving

The majority of students (89%) are currently receiving a student loan, while two-fifths (40% down from 49% in November 2004) receive help with their tuition fees. Just under two-thirds 64% of DE students claim they receive help with their tuition fees (although one would expect this to be 100% it might be that they are unaware that it is paid for or that their circumstances might have changed since the original application).

Chart 7.2 Financial support currently receiving

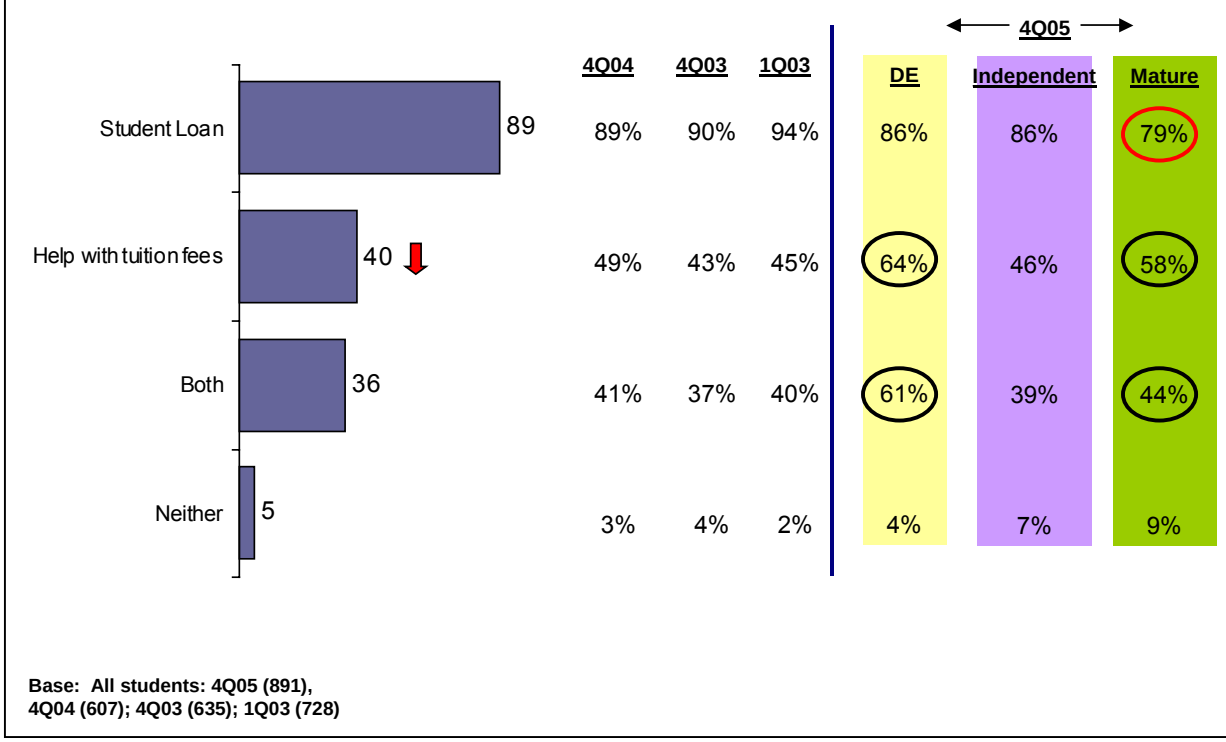
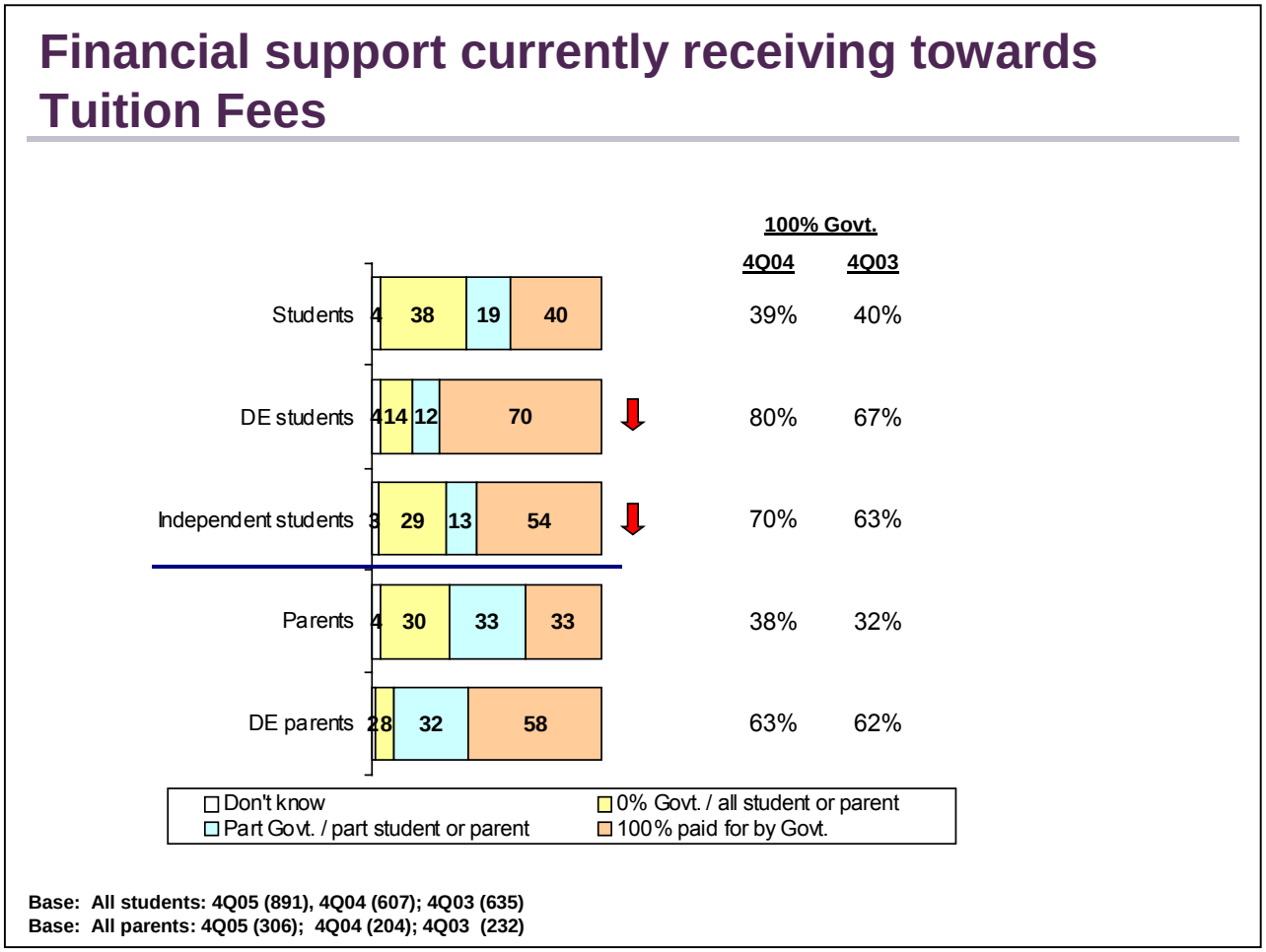


Chart 7.3 shows the level of tuition fee support received by students and parents. 40% of students and 33% of parents claimed to be receiving 100% financial support for tuition fees, while a further 19% and 33% respectively claimed to be receiving part support. Approximately a third of students 38% and parents 30% did not receive any help at all.

Not surprisingly, DE students and parents were much more likely to be receiving full tuition fee support from the Government.

Chart 7.3 Financial support currently receiving

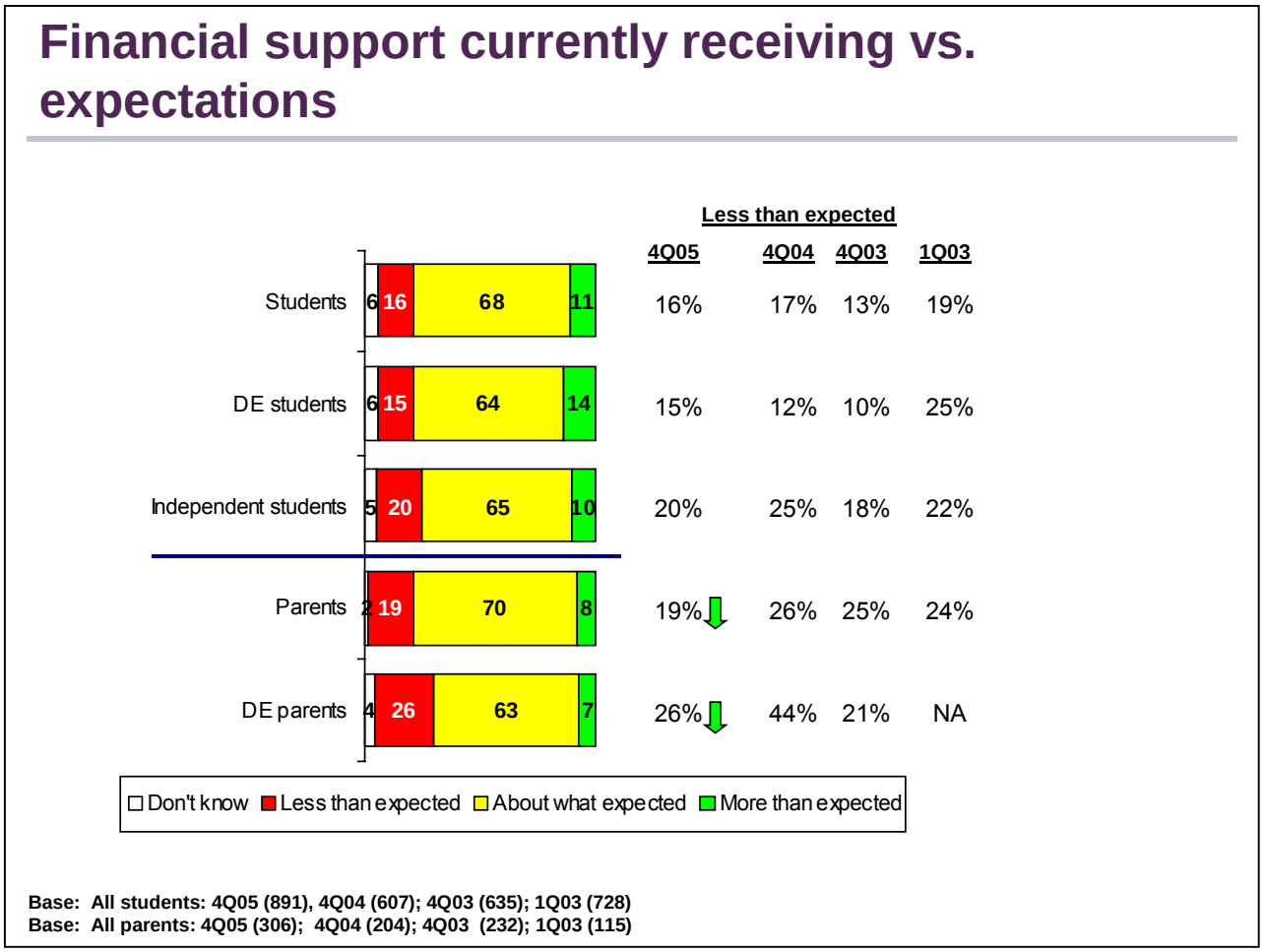


c) Financial support currently received vs. expectations

As demonstrated in chart 7.4, although the gap is narrowing parents are still slightly more likely than students to be receiving less than they originally expected to in terms of financial support. Two-thirds of students (68%) and parents (70%) are receiving 'about what they expected', while 16% of students and 19% of parents (down from around a quarter in previous years) are receiving less than they originally anticipated. Interesting there has been an increase in the proportion receiving more than expected: 11% of students (up from 5% in November 2004) and 8% of parents (up from 2%) received more than anticipated.

There were no differences by social grade among students and parents.

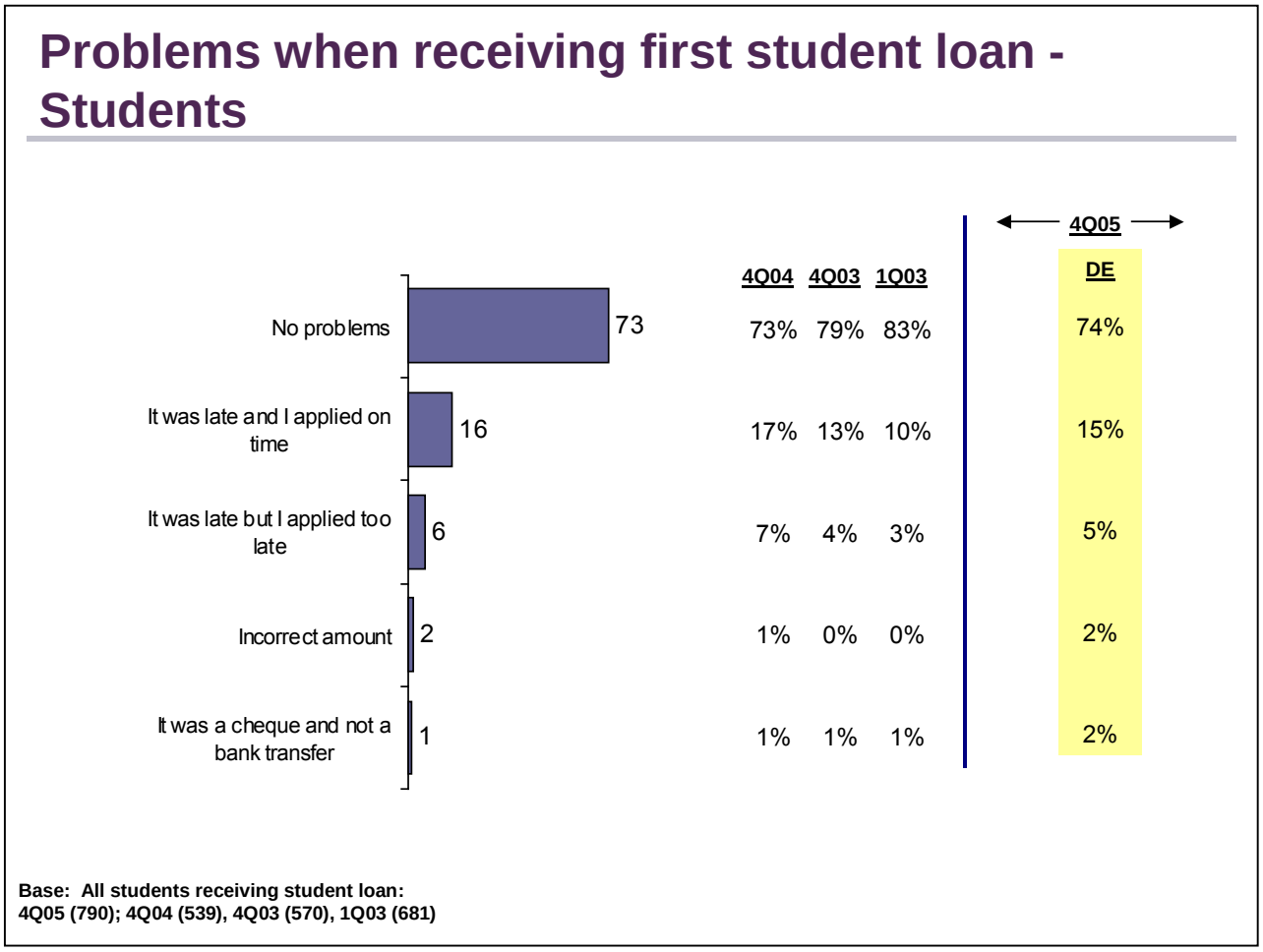
Chart 7.4 Financial support currently receiving vs. expectations



d) Problems encountered when receiving student loan

As can be shown in chart 7.5, approximately one in six students (16%) experienced a late payment even though they claim to have applied on time. 73% experienced no problems at all (same as in 2004 but still lower than in 2003).

Chart 7.5 Problems encountered



8 Overall Rating

a) The complete service

As a measure of overall satisfaction, students and parents were asked to rate the complete service including finding out about support, to applying, to seeking help, to (in the case of students) receiving payment.

It's worth noting again that the process is likely to be regarded as a tedious task and that striving for large proportions rating the process as excellent or even very good might be unrealistic. With this in mind, it is probably worth concentrating on the proportion rating the process as poor to get a real measure of dissatisfaction. This group can be classified as negative, while those rating it as fair can be classified as a group neither happy nor unhappy.

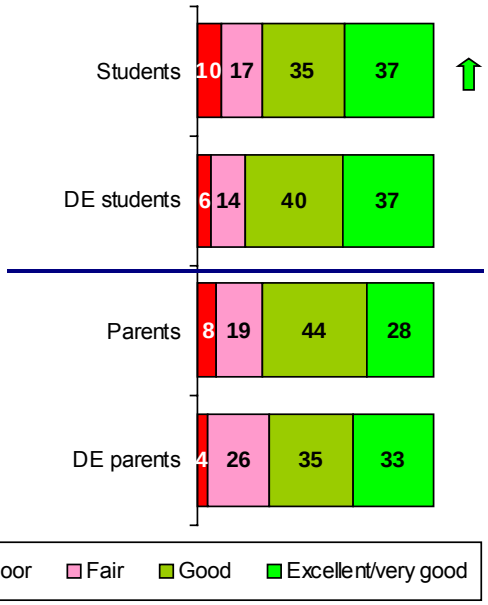
As can be seen in chart 8.1, ratings have improved for students (probably as a result of the increase in help ratings). The excellent/very good ratings among parents have remained unchanged, although importantly there has been a decrease in the proportion rating the complete service as poor.

10% of students and 8% of parents (down from 15% in November 2004) rated the whole service as poor, while 17% of students and 19% parents rated it as fair. A third of students (37% up from 32% in November 2004 but down on 42% in November 2003) and a quarter of parents (28%) rated the complete service as excellent or very good. The remaining 35% and 44% (up from 38%) respectively rated the service as 'good'.

There were no significant differences by social grade among either students or parents.

Chart 8.1 Rating the complete service

Rating the Complete Service



	Excellent/Very good (TOTAL)		
	4Q04	4Q03	1Q03
Students	32%	42%	42%
DE students	32%	39%	45%
Parents	26%	28%	26%
DE parents	25%	39%	NA

Base: All students: 4Q05 (891), 4Q04 (607); 4Q03 (635); 1Q03 (728)
Base: All parents: 4Q05 (306); 4Q04 (204); 4Q03 (232); 1Q03 (115)

b) Suggestions for improvement

Both students and parents were asked to spontaneously suggest three improvements they would like to see made to the process or service behind higher education financial support. The question was essentially asked to ensure that any burning issues not covered in the structured questions were included.

Most comments followed themes already covered in this report and are very similar to those voiced in 2004 and March and November 2003. The key suggestions were:

- Make the form less complicated / easier to complete / less questions
- Use previous information for next year's forms
- Speed up the whole process (esp. being notified of decision)
- Provide information about financial support earlier
- Improve 'real person' help / one point of contact
- (Students only) Get paid the student loan earlier (less of an issue than in 2004)

APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE PROFILE

During the main quantitative research of 891 students and 306 parents a number of exclusions and quotas were imposed on both of the samples as follows:

Students

Quota controls were set on:

- First year students (to make sure they represented approximately 65% of the sample thus ensuring a sizeable sample of students who had recently completed the full form)
- University and college type (to ensure a mix of traditional universities, new universities and Colleges of Higher Education)
- Location of LEA (to ensure a mix of LEAs, and a minimum number based in Greater London)
- Financial dependency (to ensure a minimum number of financially 'independent' students).

Groups excluded from the sample included:

- Overseas students
- Scottish and Irish students
- Postgraduate students

The following universities and colleges were visited during the research to undertake interviews:

Traditional Universities	**New Universities**	**Colleges of HE**
Loughborough University, Leicestershire	Derby University	University College Worcester
*Royal Holloway, London	South Bank University, London	St Mary's, London
London Guildhall	Liverpool John Moores	NEWI (North East Wales Institute)
Swansea University	Canterbury/University Of Kent	Pembrokeshire College
Cardiff University	Brighton University	Edge Hill College
Aberystwyth University, Wales	University of East London	Nottingham City College
Lancaster University	Middlesboro University	Chichester College
Hull University	Glamorgan University	
Leeds University	*Lincoln University	
Manchester University	*University of Portsmouth	
Bristol University		
Bangor University, Wales		
Birmingham University		
Durham University		

*Queen Mary		

** Universities/colleges included in 2005 but not in 2004*

Kings College (London), Nottingham Trent University, Northumbria University, University Of East Anglia, Northampton University and Hastings College were included in 2004 but not in 2005.

Parents

As with students, parents whose dependents came into the following categories were excluded from the research:

- Overseas students
- Scottish / Irish students
- Postgraduate students

APPENDIX 2 – STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

JIGSAW RESEARCH LIMITED
5th Floor, 13-14 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8RN
Tel: 020 7291 0810 Fax: 020 7291 0811

DfES Higher Education Customer Satisfaction

2005

Students Questionnaire

98913

Interviewer Name : _____ I.D. No._____

Respondent Name : _____

Respondent Address : _____

_____

Postcode :_____ Telephone No : _____

INTERVIEWER DECLARATION

I declare that this interview has been conducted strictly in accordance with your specifications within the MRS Code of Conduct and with a person totally unknown to me.

Signed (**INTERVIEWER)** :_____ Date _____

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is … and I am from ORC, an independent market research company. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills about higher education. Please could I ask you a few questions?

SCREENER QUESTIONNAIRE

P1a RECORD INTERVIEW LANGUAGE

English 1
Welsh/Cymraeg 2

P1b Have you taken part in any market research in the last 6 months?

Yes.....1 **CLOSE**
No .....2 **CONTINUE**

P2. Are you an undergraduate?

Yes.....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **CLOSE**

P3. And which year are you at in your undergraduate course?

1st year .....1 **SEE QUOTAS**
2nd year .....2 **SEE QUOTAS**
3rd year.....3 **SEE QUOTAS**
4th year or later.....4 **SEE QUOTAS**

P4a. And have you or anyone on your behalf **ever** had to apply for higher education student financial support for either… **READ OUT AND MULTICODE BELOW. IF RESPONDENT UNSURE, SHOW FRONT COVER OF 'PR1' OR 'PN1'**

a student loan .....1 **CONTINUE**
help with tuition fees .....2 **CONTINUE**
Neither .....3 **CLOSE**

ONLY 2nd – 4th YEAR STUDENTS (CODES 2-4 AT P3) ASK P4b, OTHERS SKIP TO P5a

P4b. And did you or someone on your behalf have to fill out an application form for higher education support **for this year**? **IF RESPONDENT UNSURE, SHOW FRONT COVER OF 'PR1' - SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **CLOSE**
Don't know/Can't remember .....3 **CLOSE**

ASK ALL

P5a. And on the last occasion you or someone on your behalf applied for higher education student support, which Local Education Authority did you apply to? **WRITE IN**

IF UNSURE, ASK THEM IF IT WAS BASED IN ENGLAND OR WALES - IF NOT ENGLAND OR WALES, THEN CLOSE.

ASK P5b TO ALL THOSE APPLYING VIA A WELSH LEA, OTHERS SKIP TO P6

P5b Can you speak both English and Welsh/ Cymraeg? **SINGLE CODE**

Just English .....1 SKIP TO P6
Just Welsh/ Cymraeg.....2 SKIP TO P6
Both.....3 CONTINUE

P5c And which would you say is your first language? **SINGLE CODE**

English 1
Welsh/ Cymraeg 2
Both equally 3

ASK ALL

P6. And when applying for higher education student support, was the assessment based on your and your parent's/household's financial situation or based solely on your financial situation, and that of your spouse if applicable?

Based on student's and parent's/household's financial situation - dependent.....1 **SEE QUOTAS**
Based solely on student's financial situation (and spouse if applicable) - independent .....2 **SEE QUOTAS**

P7. Can I just check that you are studying at (READ OUT UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE AT)? **WRITE IN (CLOSE IF NOT STUDYING AT THAT UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE)**

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. How would you rate the complete service from when you first heard about student higher education financial support until you received payment using the following scales? **SHOWCARD A - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent 1
Very good.....2
Good 3
Fair.....4
Poor 5
Don't know/Can't remember 0

FINDING OUT ABOUT STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Q2a. How did you first hear about student financial support? **DO NOT READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE BELOW**

Q2b. And which of the following sources did you use to find out about student financial support **before** applying? **SHOWCARD B - MULTI CODE BELOW**

Q2c And which source was the most helpful for finding out about student financial support **before** applying? **SHOWCARD B - SINGLE CODE**

	Q2a	Q2b	Q2c
Talk at your school or college by your LEA (Local Education Authority)	1	1	1
Through your careers advisor at your old school/college	2	2	2
Through your teachers at your old school/college	3	3	3
Through your university or college for further education	4	4	4
Through information at your local library	5	5	5
By talking to friends or relatives	6	6	6
Aim higher roadshow	7	7	7
UCAS Higher Education Convention	8	8	8
Television	9	9	9
Radio	10	10	10
Popular magazines	11	11	11
DfES website	12	12	12
Directgov website	13	13	13
Student Finance Direct website	14	14	14
Student Finance Wales website	15	15	15
Other websites (specify)	0	0	0
Other (specify)	X	X	X
Don't know/Can't remember	Y	Y	Y

Q2d. And overall how straightforward would you say it was to **find out about what was available** in terms of student financial support, would you say it was… **SHOWCARD C - SINGLE CODE**

Very straightforward.....1
Fairly straightforward 2
Not very straightforward.....3
Not at all straightforward.....4
Don't know/Can't remember 5

Q3. Using these scales how would you rate:
(a) the **amount of information** you had access to when trying to find out about student financial support? **SHOWCARD D - SINGLE CODE**
(b) The **clarity of the information** you had access to? **SHOWCARD D - SINGLE CODE**

	Q3a	Q3b
Excellent	1	1
Very good	2	2
Good	3	3
Fair	4	4
Poor	5	5
Don't know/Can't remember	0	0

Q3c. In terms of the financial support information available to you before applying for higher education, would you say this information was made available to you…**READ OUT – SINGLE CODE**

Too far in advance of you having to apply.....1
About the right amount of time before you had to apply…….2
Slightly later than you would have liked.....3
Much later than you would have liked 4
Don't know/Can't remember 5

Q3d. Thinking back to when you were first considering higher education, which **three** of the following methods were most useful in finding out about student financial support? **SHOWCARD E** - **MULTI CODE**

Television.....1
Interactive Digital TV.....2
Radio.....3
The Internet.....4
Guides/booklets/fact sheets 5
Visit to your school/college by your Local Education Authority 6
Advice from your teacher / career's advisor 7
Articles in popular magazines.....8
Direct Mail to home address.....9
Short film.....10
None (NOT ON SHOWCARD) 0
Don't know/Can't remember (NOT ON SHOWCARD)..... X

Q3e. Before applying, were you ever shown a short film about student financial support? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1
No 2
Don't know/Can't remember 3

APPLICATION PROCESS

Q4. When applying for financial support did you understand the importance of applying by the deadline provided which was 29th April 2005 for student support which did not depend on your income, or if it did depend on your income, 1st July for 1st year students and 27th May for 2nd year or higher students? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1
No 2
Don't know 3

Q6. Which of the following sources, if any, did you refer to when filling out the application form for financial support? **SHOWCARD F - MULTI CODE**

Accompanying notes (SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE) 1
The financial support booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE).....2
The 'childcare grant' booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE).....3
The 'bridging the gap' booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE).....4
The 'guide to terms and conditions' booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE).....5
The DfES website 6
Student Finance Direct website.....7
Other website (specify).....8
Don't know/Can't remember 9

Q7a. When you applied for higher education student support, did you apply using…?
READ OUT (DO NOT READ OUT DON'T KNOW)

An interactive online form i.e. you completed the form online.....1 SKIP TO Q7e
Or, a paper application form .....2 CONTINUE
Don't know/Can't remember .....3 CONTINUE

Q7b. Were you aware that there was the facility to apply using an interactive form over the Internet? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1 SKIP TO Q7d
No .....2 CONTINUE

Q7c. If you had known, would you have used this interactive form rather than fill out a paper form? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1 SKIP TO Q7e
No .....2 CONTINUE
Maybe/Don't know/Depends.....3 CONTINUE

ASK Q7d IF CODE 1 AT Q7b OR CODES 2-3 AT Q7c, OTHERS SKIP TO Q7e

Q7d. Why did/would you not fill out an online form over the Internet? **DO NOT READ OUT AND MULTI CODE**

No access to the Internet.....1
Find the Internet difficult to use 2
Easier to do on paper 3
Quicker to do on paper 4
I can stop and start on paper.....5
Concern over security.....6
Other (specify) 0

ASK ALL

Q7e Which of the following benefits would make you more likely to complete the form online rather than on paper? **SHOWCARD G - MULTI CODE**

If it made it easier to only answer the questions
you definitely needed to answer 1
If it meant you application was processed faster.....2
If there was less need to provide supporting evidence 3
If you were able to track your application online 4
None of the above 5
Other (specify) 6

Q8. Using these scales, how would you rate the **whole application process** that you went through? **SHOWCARD H - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent 1
Very good.....2
Good 3
Fair.....4
Poor 5
Don't know/Can't remember 0

Q9. I'm going to read out some different stages in the application process and, for each one, I'd like you tell me how you rate each one? **SHOWCARD J (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(a) The ease of getting hold of the application form for higher education support	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(b) The application form for higher education support being simple and easy to complete	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(c) The application form for higher education support being as concise as possible in terms of the level of information required	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(d) The amount of time it took from you submitting the application form for higher education support to receiving a decision on the level of financial support you would get	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(e) The clarity and the level of detail you received explaining the decision behind the level of financial support you would get	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

ASK QUESTIONS 9f-i AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q6

Q9. And now thinking about the information sources you used when filling out the form. How would you rate overall …**SHOWCARD J (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(f) The accompanying notes to the application form for higher education support (IF CODE 1 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(g) The 'financial support' booklet (IF CODE 2 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(h) The 'Guide to terms and conditions' booklet (IF CODE 5 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(i) The DfES website/ Student Finance Direct website (IF CODE 6 OR 7 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

IF A 2ND, 3RD OR 4TH YEAR STUDENT (CODES 2-4 AT P3) ASK Q9k, OTHERS SKIP TO Q9m

Q9k. Thinking of this year's application form for higher education support overall, how would you rate it in comparison to last year's form? **SHOWCARD K. SINGLE CODE**

Much better	1	**CONTINUE**
Slightly better	2	**CONTINUE**
The same	3	**SKIP TO Q9m**
Slightly worse	4	**CONTINUE**
Much worse	5	**CONTINUE**
Don't know/Can't remember	6	**SKIP TO Q9m**

Q9l Why do you say that? **WRITE IN**

ASK ALL

Q9m. Did you use the calculator on the StudentFinanceDirect website to work out an estimate of your entitlement to financial support? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes	1	**CONTINUE**
No	2	**SKIP TO Q9p**
Don't know	3	**SKIP TO Q9p**

Q9n. And using these scales, how helpful did you find the calculator on the StudentFinanceDirect website? **SHOWCARD L - SINGLE CODE**

Extremely helpful	1
Very helpful	2
Quite helpful	3
Not very helpful	4
Not at all helpful	5
Don't know/Can't remember	0

ASK ALL

Q9p. Did you receive an ID number and PIN code or password enabling you to check your application status over the Internet? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes	1	**CONTINUE**
No	2	**SKIP TO Q10a**
Don't know	3	**SKIP TO Q10a**

Q9r. And did you actually use your ID number and PIN code or password to check your application status over the Internet? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes	1	**CONTINUE**
No	2	**SKIP TO Q10a**
Don't know	3	**SKIP TO Q10a**

Q9s. And using these scales, how helpful did you find this service? **SHOWCARD M - SINGLE CODE**

Extremely helpful 1
Very helpful 2
Quite helpful 3
Not very helpful 4
Not at all helpful 5
Don't know/Can't remember 0

SEEKING HELP

ASK ALL

Q10a. Did you seek help at any point in the application process such as from your LEA, the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company (SLC) or any other body? **IF YES:** Was this face-to-face, over the telephone or via email? **POSSIBLE MULTICODE**

Yes, face-to-face	1	**CONTINUE**
Yes, telephone	2	**CONTINUE**
Yes, email	3	**CONTINUE**
No	4	**SKIP TO Q13**
Don't know	5	**SKIP TO Q13**

Q10b. Who did you contact for help? **DO NOT READ OUT - POSSIBLE MULTICODE**

Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company	1	ASK Q11a
LEA (Local Education Authority)	2	
University/College for Further Education	3	
Old school / college	4	
Accountant	5	
Other (specify)	6	
Don't know/Can't remember	7	

ASK Q11a-d IF CONTACTED THE 'CUSTOMER SUPPORT OFFICE' AT THE STUDENT LOANS COMPANY (CODE 1 AT Q10b) – OTHERS GO TO ROUTING ABOVE Q12a

Q11a. When contacting the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company, did you actually talk to a staff member or did you get the information you needed by pressing buttons for information? **SINGLE CODE**

Talked to staff member only 1
Pushed buttons only 2
Both 3
Don't know/Can't remember 4

Q11b. And overall how would you rate the **help you received** from the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company using the following scale? **SHOWCARD N - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent	1	**SKIP TO Q11d**
Very good	2	**SKIP TO Q11d**
Good	3	**SKIP TO Q11d**
Fair	4	**CONTINUE**
Poor	5	**CONTINUE**
Don't know/Can't remember	0	**SKIP TO Q11d**

Q11c. Why do you say that? **DO NOT READ OUT AND CODE BELOW**

Help wasn't available at the times I wanted.....1
The advice was unsatisfactory / unhelpful.....2
The advice was inconsistent.....3
Other (specify) 4

Q11d. And using the following scale, how would you rate the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company for the…**READ OUT. SHOWCARD P (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(a) Helpfulness of the person answering your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(b) The speed of getting an answer to your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(c) The tone of the reply	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

ASK Q12a-c IF CONTACTED LEA (LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY) (CODE 2 AT Q10b), OTHERS SKIP TO Q13

Q12a. And overall how would you rate the **help you received** from your Local Education Authority using the following scale? **SHOWCARD Q - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent .....1 **SKIP TO Q12c**
Very good.....2 **SKIP TO Q12c**
Good .....3 **SKIP TO Q12c**
Fair.....4 **CONTINUE**
Poor .....5 **CONTINUE**
Don't know/Can't remember .....0 **SKIP TO Q12c**

Q12b. Why do you say that? **DO NOT READ OUT AND CODE BELOW**

Help wasn't available at the times I wanted.....1
The advice was unsatisfactory / unhelpful.....2
The advice was inconsistent.....3
Other (specify) 4

Q12c. And using the following scale, how would you rate your Local Education Authority for the…**READ OUT. SHOWCARD R (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(a) Helpfulness of the person answering your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(b) The speed of getting an answer to your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(c) The tone of the reply	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

RECEIVING FUNDS

ASK ALL

Q13. Thinking of when you were notified of the decision regarding the level of financial support you would get, was this… **READ OUT – SINGLE CODE**

Too far in advance of you starting your studies.....1
About the right amount of time before you started studying.....2
Before you started studying but later than you would have liked.....3
After you had started studying.....4
Don't know/Can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT).....5

Q14a. Do you currently receive financial support in the form of… **READ OUT - MULTICODE**

a student loan 1
help with tuition fees 2
Or, neither.....3

ASK Q14b IF CODE 1 AT Q14a

Q14b. Did you encounter any problems when receiving your **first** student loan payment? **IF YES:** What problems did you encounter? **DO NOT READ OUT - IF RESPONDENT SAYS FUNDS WERE LATE, ESTABLISH WHETHER THEY APPLIED TOO LATE. POSSIBLE MULTICODE**

No problems 1
It was late but I applied too late 2
It was late and I applied on time 3
It was the incorrect amount 4
I had to queue to get it.....5
It was a cheque and not transferred directly into my account.....6

Q15. If you had to make **three suggestions** to improve the process and service behind higher education financial support, what would they be? **WRITE IN**

1.

2.

3.

ASK Qs 16a-c IF SPEAK WELSH (CODES 2-3 AT P5b), OTHERS SKIP TO Q16e

Q16a. Did you use any of the following Welsh Language written materials at any point in the application process? **SHOWCARD S. MULTI CODE**

Guides / booklets	1	CONTINUE
Application form	2	CONTINUE
Accompanying notes	3	CONTINUE
Websites e.g. Student Finance Wales website	4	CONTINUE
Other (specify)	5	CONTINUE
None	6	SKIP TO Q16d
Don't know/Can't remember	7	SKIP TO Q16e

Q16b. How would you rate the Welsh Language written materials you used, using the following scales? **SHOWCARD T. - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent	1	SKIP TO Q16e
Very good	2	SKIP TO Q16e
Good	3	SKIP TO Q16e
Fair	4	CONTINUE
Poor	5	CONTINUE
Don't know/Can't remember	0	SKIP TO Q16e

Q16c. Why do you say that? What could have been improved? **WRITE IN**

Q16d. Why didn't you use any Welsh Language written materials at any point in the application process? **WRITE IN BELOW**

ASK ALL

Q16e. Is the amount of financial support you receive…**READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE**

More than you originally expected	1
About what you expected	2
Less than you originally expected	3
Don't know/Can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT)	4

Q17. Thinking back, if it had been available would you haven give consent for data to be shared by other Government Agencies in the following ways? **SHOWCARD U. SINGLE CODE**

		Yes	No	Don't know
(a)	Data shared with UCAS and / or Education Maintenance Allowance so that much of the form can be pre-populated with the information that you have submitted to them and you do not need to complete your course details	1	2	3
(b)	Data shared with the UK Passport Service to confirm your identity, removing the need for you to provide your passport or birth certificate as evidence	1	2	3
(c)	Data shared with HM Revenue and Customs (formally HM Inland Revenue) so that you do not need to provide details or evidence of your income or your parents or partners income	1	2	3

DEMOGRAPHICS

I'd now like to ask you a few questions about yourself…

D1a Firstly, how old are you? **WRITE BELOW**

IF OLDER THAN 21, ASK THE FOLLOWING:

D1b. Are you currently studying as a mature student, or did you enter this course straight from school/college?

Mature student.....1 CONTINUE
Non-mature student.....2 SKIP TO D2

D1c. Which of the following bands did your total household income fall into when you provided your financial details? **SHOWCARD X. SINGLE CODE**

Less than £10,000 1
£10,000 to less than £15,580 2
£15,580 to less than £40,000 3
£40,000 or more 4
Refused/Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT) 5

D2. Establish Social Class (from below):

A / B/ C1.....1
C2 / D / E 2

IF P6 '1' SOCIAL CLASS TO BE BASED ON CHIEF WAGE EARNER IN PARENTS HOUSEHOLD
IF P6 '2' SOCIAL CLASS TO BE BASED ON STUDENTS SOCIAL CLASS

OCCUPATION OF CHIEF WAGE EARNER (Please write in) – SEE INSTRUCTION ABOVE

DETAILS OF CHIEF INCOME EARNER (EITHER PARENT OR STUDENT AS PER INSTRUCTION ABOVE)

CIRCLE CODE OR WRITE IN AS APPROPRIATE
DATA SERVICES – DO NOT PUNCH QUESTIONS C1 TO C7

C1.	Working full time	|	1	| **C2**
	Working part time	|	2	| **C2**
	Private Pensions	|	3	| **C9**
	Not working – Housewife	|	4	| **C9**
	Retired state pension only	|	5	| **C9**
	Student	|	6	| **C9**

Retired with occupational/personal pension		7	**C2**
Unemployed in last 6 months		8	**C2**
Unemployed for over 6 months		9	**C9**

C2.JobTitle/Rank _____

C3.Type of Firm/Organisation: _____

C4. C.I.E. is... An Employee **A** Self-Employed **B**

C5. Work is… Manual **A** Non-Manual **B**

C6. Responsible for Other People?

YES **A** NO **B**

C7. **For How Many**? _____

WORKING STATUS

- ☐ **Non working**
- ☐ **Working part time**
- ☐ **Working full time**
- ☐ **Student**
- ☐ **Retired**

Please tick in boxes as appropriate

SEX: ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

SOCIAL STATUS

A ☐ **B** ☐ **C1** ☐ **C2** ☐ **DE** ☐

D2a. Which of the following best describes the contribution you or your parents have made towards your tuition fees? **SHOWCARD Z. SINGLE CODE**

I have made no contribution with 100% of my tuition fees being paid for by the government 1
I have made a part contribution with some of the cost of my tuition fees being paid for by the government 2
I have made a full contribution of £1,175 towards the cost of my tuition fees..... 3
Don't know / Can't remember 4

D3a. Which of the categories A-E, best describes your ethnic origin? **SHOWCARD AA. SINGLE CODE**

ONCE RESPONDENT HAS CHOSEN FROM A-E, SAY: And within category (INSERT AS APPROPRIATE), which answer best describes your cultural background?

A. White

British 1
Irish 2
Other 3

B. Mixed

White & Black Caribbean 4
White & Black African 5
White & Asian 6
Any other mix 7

C. Asian or Asian British

Indian 8
Pakistani 9
Bangladeshi 10
Other 11

D. Black or Black British

Caribbean 12
African 13
Other black background 14

E. Chinese or Other Ethnic Background

Chinese 15
Other (write in) 16

D3b. Would be willing take part in a short follow-up telephone interview if we wanted to re-contact and ask you a few more questions but in a bit more depth? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes ..... 1 RECORD TELEPHONE NUMBER BELOW
No 2
Don't know 0

THANK AND CLOSE

D4 RECORD GENDER

Male 1
Female 2

D5 RECORD REGION
a) UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE
b) LOCAL LEA

	College (a)	Local LEA (b)
North East	1	1
North West	2	2
East Midlands	3	3
West Midlands	4	4
East of England	5	5
South East (excluding Greater London)	6	6
Greater London	7	7
South West	8	8
Yorks/Humber	9	9
Wales	0	0

D6 RECORD UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE TYPE

'Traditional' University 1
'New' University 2
College of Further Education 3

APPENDIX 3 – PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

JIGSAW RESEARCH LIMITED
5th Floor, 13-14 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8RN
Tel: 020 7291 0810 Fax: 020 7291 0811

04/08/2006

DfES Higher Education Customer Satisfaction

2005

Parents Questionnaire

98913

Interviewer Name: _____ I.D. No._____

Respondent Name:_____

Respondent Address:_____

_____

Postcode :_____ Telephone No : _____

INTERVIEWER DECLARATION

I declare that this interview has been conducted strictly in accordance with your specifications within the MRS Code of Conduct and with a person totally unknown to me.

Signed (**INTERVIEWER)** :_____ Date _____

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is … and I am from ORC, an independent market research company. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills about higher education. Please could I ask you a few questions?

SCREENER QUESTIONNAIRE

P1a RECORD INTERVIEW LANGUAGE

English 1
Welsh/ Cymraeg 2

P1b Have you taken part in any market research in the last 6 months?

Yes.....1 **CLOSE**
No .....2 **CONTINUE**

P2. Do you or anyone in your household work in any of these occupations?

READ LIST (EXCEPT NONE)

Education.....1 **CLOSE**
Healthcare 2
Public relations 3
Market research.....4 **CLOSE**
None of these. (**DO NOT READ OUT)** .....5 **CONTINUE**

P3. Do you have and sons, daughters or other dependents who are undergraduates at University or at a College for further education?

Yes.....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **CLOSE**

P4. How many children do you currently have who are undergraduates at University or at a College for further education?

One 1
Two or more.....2

P5a. And which year/s is/are your son/daughter/children at in their undergraduate course/s?

1st year .....1 **SEE QUOTAS**
2nd year .....2 **SEE QUOTAS**
3rd year.....3 **SEE QUOTAS**
4th year or later.....4 **SEE QUOTAS**

(IF PARENT OF MORE THAN ONE UNDERGRADUATE – PICK BEST UNDERGRADUATE FOR QUOTAS, CODE BELOW AND MAKE CLEAR YOU WILL BE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT HIM/HER ONLY)

P5b.

1st year 1
2nd year 2
3rd year 3
4th year or later 4

P6. And have you personally had to fill out sections requesting financial information of an application form for higher education support in the last 12 months as part of your son/daughter/dependent's application? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes .....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **CLOSE**

IF SPOUSE / PARTNER FILLED OUT FORM, ASK TO SPEAK TO THEM

P7a. And on the last occasion you filled out this form, which Local Education Authority did you send it to? **WRITE IN**

IF UNSURE, ASK THEM IF IT WAS BASED IN ENGLAND OR WALES - IF NOT ENGLAND OR WALES, THEN CLOSE.

ASK P7b TO ALL THOSE APPLYING VIA A WELSH LEA, OTHERS SKIP TO P8

P7b Can you speak both English and Welsh/ Cymraeg? **SINGLE CODE**

Just English .....1 SKIP TO P8
Just Welsh/ Cymraeg .....2 SKIP TO P8
Both .....3 CONTINUE

P7c And which would you say is your first language? **SINGLE CODE**

English 1
Welsh/ Cymraeg 2
Both equally 3

P8. At which University or College for Further Education is your son/daughter studying? **WRITE IN - SEE QUOTAS (CLOSE ANY STUDYING OUTSIDE ENGLAND OR WALES)**

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. How would you rate the complete service from when you first heard about higher education financial support until you found out how much financial support your son/daughter/dependent would receive? **SHOWCARD A - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent 1
Very good.....2
Good 3
Fair.....4
Poor 5
Don't know/Can't remember 0

FINDING OUT ABOUT STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Q2a. How did you first hear about student financial support? **DO NOT READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE BELOW**

Q2b. And through which of the following sources did you use to find out about student financial support **before** applying? **SHOWCARD B - MULTI CODE BELOW**

Q2c And which source was the most helpful for finding out about student financial support **before** applying? **SHOWCARD B - SINGLE CODE**

	Q2a	Q2b	Q2c
Through attending a talk at your son/daughter/ dependent's school or college by your LEA (Local Education Authority)	1	1	1
Through talking to son/daughter/dependent following a talk given to them at their school or college by your LEA	2	2	2
Through careers advisor at your son/daughter/ dependent's old school/college	3	3	3
Through teachers at your son/daughter/ dependent's old school/college	4	4	4
Through your son/daughter/ dependent's university or college for further education	5	5	5
Through information at your local library	6	6	6
By talking to friends or relatives	7	7	7
Aim higher roadshow	8	8	8
UCAS Higher Education Convention	9	9	9
Television	10	10	10
Radio	11	11	11
Popular magazines	12	12	12
DfES website	13	13	13
Directgov website	14	14	14
Student Finance Direct website	15	15	15
Student Finance Wales website	16	16	16
Other websites (specify)	0	0	0
Other (specify)	X	X	X
Don't know/Can't remember	Y	Y	Y

Q2d. And overall how straightforward would you say it was to **find out about what was available** in terms of student financial support, would you say it was… **SHOWCARD C - SINGLE CODE**

Very straightforward.....1
Fairly straightforward 2
Not very straightforward.....3
Not at all straightforward.....4
Don't know/Can't remember 5

Q3. Using these scales how would you rate:
(b) the **amount of information** you had access to when trying to find out about student financial support? **SHOWCARD D - SINGLE CODE**
(b) The **clarity of the information** you had access to? **SHOWCARD D - SINGLE CODE**

	Q3a	**Q3b**
Excellent	1	1
Very good	2	2
Good	3	3
Fair	4	4
Poor	5	5
Don't know/Can't remember	0	0

Q3c. In terms of the financial support information available to you before your son/daughter/dependent was applying for higher education, would you say this information was made available to you…**READ OUT – SINGLE CODE**

Too far in advance of having to apply.....1
About the right amount of time before having to apply.....2
Slightly later than you would have liked.....3
Much later than you would have liked 4
Don't know/Can't remember 5

Q3d. Thinking back to when you were first considering higher education, which **three** of the following methods were most useful in finding out about student financial support? **SHOWCARD E** - **MULTI CODE**

Television.....1
Interactive Digital TV.....2
Radio.....3
The Internet.....4
Guides/booklets/fact sheets 5
Visit to your school/college by your Local Education Authority 6
Advice from your teacher / career's advisor 7
Articles in popular magazines.....8
Direct Mail to home address.....9
Short film.....10
None (NOT ON SHOWCARD) 0
Don't know/Can't remember (NOT ON SHOWCARD)..... X

APPLICATION FORM

Q4. When applying for financial support did you understand the importance of applying by the deadline provided which was 29th April 2005 for student support which did not depend on your income, or if it did depend on your income, 1st July for 1st year students and 27th May for 2nd year or higher students? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1
No 2
Don't know 3

Q6. Which of the following sources, if any, did you refer to when filling out the sections requesting financial information on the application form for financial support? **SHOWCARD F - MULTICODE**

Accompanying notes (SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE) 1
The financial support booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE) 2
The 'childcare grant' booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE) 3
The 'bridging the gap' booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE) 4
The 'guide to terms and conditions' booklet
(SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE) 5
The DfES website 6
Student Finance Direct website.....7
Other website (specify).....8
Don't know/Can't remember 9

Q7a. When you applied for higher education student support, did you apply using…? **READ OUT (DO NOT READ OUT DON'T KNOW)**

An interactive online form i.e. you completed the form online.....1 SKIP TO Q7e
Or, a paper application form .....2 CONTINUE
Don't know/Can't remember .....3 CONTINUE

Q7b. Were you aware that there was the facility to apply using an interactive form over the Internet? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1 SKIP TO Q7d
No .....2 CONTINUE

Q7c. If you had known, would you have used this interactive form rather than fill out a paper form? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1 SKIP TO Q7e
No .....2 CONTINUE
Maybe/Don't know/Depends.....3 CONTINUE

ASK Q7d IF CODE 1 AT Q7b OR CODES 2-3 AT Q7c, OTHERS SKIP TO Q7e

Q7d. Why did/would you not fill out an online form over the Internet? **DO NOT READ OUT AND MULTI CODE**

No access to the Internet.....1
Find the Internet difficult to use 2
Easier to do on paper 3
Quicker to do on paper 4
I can stop and start on paper.....5
Concern over security.....6
Other (specify) 0

ASK ALL

Q7e. Which of the following benefits would make you more likely to complete the form online rather than on paper? **SHOWCARD G - MULTI CODE**

If it made it easier to only answer the questions
you definitely needed to answer 1
If it meant you application was processed faster.....2
If there was less need to provide supporting evidence 3
If you were able to track your application online 4
None of the above 5
Other (specify) 6

Q8. And using these scales, how would you rate the **whole application process** that you went through? **SHOWCARD H - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent 1
Very good.....2
Good 3
Fair.....4
Poor 5
Don't know/Can't remember 0

Q9. I'm going to read out some different stages in the application process and, for each one, I'd like you tell me how you rate each one? **SHOWCARD J (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(a) The application form for higher education support being simple and easy to complete	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(b) The application form for higher education support being as concise as possible in terms of the level of information required	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(c) The amount of time it took from you submitting the application form for higher education support to receiving a decision on the level of financial support your son/daughter/dependent would get	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(d) The clarity and level of detail you received explaining the decision behind the level of financial support your son/daughter/dependent would get	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

ASK QUESTIONS 9f-i AS APPROPRIATE FROM Q6

Q9. And now thinking about the information sources you used when filling out the forms. How would you rate overall …**SHOWCARD J (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

f) The accompanying notes to the higher education support form (IF CODE 1 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
g) The 'financial support' booklet (IF CODE 2 AT Q6) (SHOW RESPONDENT EXAMPLE)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
h) The 'Guide to terms and conditions' booklet (IF CODE 5 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
i) The DfES website/ Student Finance Direct website (IF CODE 6 OR 7 AT Q6)	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

IF PARENT OF A 2ND, 3RD OR 4TH YEAR STUDENT (CODES 2-4 AT P5) ASK Q9j, OTHERS SKIP TO Q9q

Q9j. Thinking of this year's application form overall, how would you rate it in comparison to last year's financial assessment form? **SHOWCARD K - SINGLE CODE**

Much better 1
Slightly better 2
The same 3
Slightly worse 4
Much worse 5
Don't know/Can't remember 6

Q9k. One change made to this year's form was that for 2nd year or higher, students or parents with an income below a certain threshold did not need to provide detailed financial information and for all continuing students, documentary evidence such as a P60 did not have to be included when returning the application form. Can you remember whether you were exempt and/or you did not have to provide documentary evidence? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes, exempt / I didn't need to provide evidence ..... 1 **CONTINUE**
No, not exempt / I had to provide evidence ..... 2 **SKIP TO Q9q**
Don't know/Can't remember ..... 3 **SKIP TO Q9q**

Q9l. Do you think the application form and/or supporting notes and booklets made it clear that you didn't need to provide detailed information and documentary evidence? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes 1
No 2
Don't know/Can't remember 3

Q9m. And how useful was this change? Would you say it was…**READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE**

Very useful 1
Fairly useful.....2
Not very useful 3
Not at all useful 4
Don't know/Can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT).....5

Q9n. Did the fact that you didn't have to supply detailed information and documentary evidence make you concerned at all? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes .....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **SKIP TO Q9q**
Don't know/Can't remember .....3 **SKIP TO Q9q**

Q9p. What were you concerned about? **DO NOT READ OUT AND MULTI CODE**

My son/daughter wouldn't get as much money 1
Other (specify) 2

ASK ALL

Q9q. Did you receive an ID number and PIN code or password enabling you to check your application status or change your details over the Internet? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes .....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **SKIP TO Q10a**
Don't know .....3 **SKIP TO Q10a**

Q9r. And did you actually use your ID number and PIN code or password to check your application status or change your details over the Internet? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes .....1 **CONTINUE**
No .....2 **SKIP TO Q10a**
Don't know .....3 **SKIP TO Q10a**

Q9s. And using these scales, how helpful did you find this service? **SHOWCARD M - SINGLE CODE**

Extremely helpful 1
Very helpful 2
Quite helpful.....3
Not very helpful 4
Not at all helpful 5
Don't know/Can't remember 0

SEEKING HELP

ASK ALL

Q10a. Did you seek help at any point in the application process from your LEA, the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company or any other body? **IF YES:** Was this face-to-face, over the telephone or via email? **POSSIBLE MULTICODE**

Yes, face-to-face	1	**CONTINUE**
Yes, telephone	2	**CONTINUE**
Yes, email	3	**CONTINUE**
No	4	**SKIP TO Q13a**
Don't know	5	**SKIP TO Q13a**

Q10b. Who did you contact for help? **DO NOT READ OUT - POSSIBLE MULTICODE**

Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company	1
LEA (Local Education Authority)	2
University/College for Further Education	3
Accountant	4
Your son/daughter/ dependent's school/college	5
Other (specify)	6
Don't know/Can't remember	7

ASK Q10c IF USE ACCOUTANT AT Q10b (CODE 4)

Q10c. Do you think the application form could have been simplified to avoid you having to use an accountant?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Can't remember	3

ASK Q11a-c IF CONTACTED THE 'CUSTOMER SUPPORT OFFICE' AT THE STUDENT LOANS COMPANY (CODE 1 AT Q10b)

Q11a. And overall how would you rate the **help you received** from the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company using the following scale? **SHOWCARD N - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent	1	**SKIP TO Q11c**
Very good	2	**SKIP TO Q11c**
Good	3	**SKIP TO Q11c**
Fair	4	**CONTINUE**
Poor	5	**CONTINUE**
Don't know/Can't remember	0	**SKIP TO Q11c**

Q11b. Why do you say that? **DO NOT READ OUT AND CODE BELOW**

Help wasn't available at the times I wanted	1
The advice was unsatisfactory / unhelpful	2
The advice was inconsistent	3
Other (specify)	4

Q11c. And using the following scale, how would you rate the Customer Support Office at the Student Loans Company for the…**READ OUT. SHOWCARD P (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(a) Helpfulness of the person answering your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(b) The speed of getting an answer to your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(c) The tone of the reply	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

ASK Q12a-c IF CONTACTED LEA (LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY) (CODE 2 AT Q10b), OTHERS SKIP TO Q13a

Q12a. And overall how would you rate the **help you received** from your Local Education Authority using the following scale? **SHOWCARD Q - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent	1	**SKIP TO Q12c**
Very good	2	**SKIP TO Q12c**
Good	3	**SKIP TO Q12c**
Fair	4	**CONTINUE**
Poor	5	**CONTINUE**
Don't know/Can't remember	0	**SKIP TO Q12c**

Q12b. Why do you say that? **DO NOT READ OUT AND CODE BELOW**

Help wasn't available at the times I wanted	1
The advice was unsatisfactory / unhelpful	2
The advice was inconsistent	3
Other (specify)	4

Q12c. And using the following scale, how would you rate your Local Education Authority for the…**READ OUT. SHOWCARD R (RATING SCALES) - SINGLE CODE**

(a) Helpfulness of the person answering your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(b) The speed of getting an answer to your query	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5
(c) The tone of the reply	Excellent 1	Very Good 2	Good 3	Fair 4	Poor 5

ASK ALL

Q13a. Thinking of when you were notified of the decision regarding the level of financial support your son/daughter/dependent would get, was this… **READ OUT – SINGLE CODE**

Too far in advance of them starting their studies	1
About the right amount of time before they started studying	2
Before they started studying but later than you would have liked	3
After they had started studying	4
Don't know/Can't remember	5

Q14. If you had to make **three suggestions** to improve the process and service behind higher education financial support, what would they be? **WRITE IN**

1.

2.

3.

ASK Qs 15a-c IF SPEAK WELSH (CODES 2-3 AT P7b), OTHERS SKIP TO Q15e

Q15a. Did you use any of the following Welsh Language written materials at any point in the application process? **SHOWCARD S. MULTI CODE**

Guides / booklets	1	CONTINUE
Application form	2	CONTINUE
Accompanying notes	3	CONTINUE
Websites e.g. Student Finance Wales website	4	CONTINUE
Other (specify)	5	CONTINUE
None	6	SKIP TO Q15d
Don't know/Can't remember	7	SKIP TO Q15e

Q15b. How would you rate the Welsh Language written materials you used, using the following scales? **SHOWCARD T. - SINGLE CODE**

Excellent	1	SKIP TO Q15e
Very good	2	SKIP TO Q15e
Good	3	SKIP TO Q15e
Fair	4	CONTINUE
Poor	5	CONTINUE
Don't know/Can't remember	0	SKIP TO Q15e

Q15c. Why do you say that? What could have been improved? **WRITE IN**

Q15d. Why didn't you use any Welsh Language written materials at any point in the application process? **WRITE IN BELOW**

ASK ALL

Q15e. Is the amount of financial support your son/daughter/dependent receives…**READ OUT AND SINGLE CODE**

More than you originally expected 1
About what you expected 2
Less than you originally expected 3
Don't know/Can't remember (DO NOT READ OUT).....4

Q16. Thinking back, if it had been available would you haven give consent for data to be shared with HM Revenue and Customs (formally HM Inland Revenue) so that you do not need to provide details or evidence of your income or your partner's income? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1
No 2
Don't know 0

Q17. One possible change being considered is to use an earlier tax year when assessing people's income. For example, instead of assessing the tax year ending April 2005 for this year's financial support, in future it will be a year earlier than that so people are more likely to have their P60 and any other end of year financial information to hand. So, for example, if this change had been implemented last year, you would have been asked to provide information relating to the tax year ending April 2004 for this year's financial support. How easy do you think it would have been to provide financial information for the tax year ending April 2004? Do you think it would have been…? **SHOWCARD V - SINGLE CODE**

Very easy.....1
Fairly easy.....2
Fairly difficult.....3
Or, Very difficult 4
Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT).....5

DEMOGRAPHICS

I'd now like to ask you a few questions about yourself…

D1a Which of the following age bands do you fall into? **SHOWCARD W - SINGLE CODE**

26-35.....2
36-45.....3
46-55.....4
56-65.....5
66 or older.....6
Refused..... X

D1b. Which of the following bands did your total household income fall into when you provided your financial details? **SHOWCARD X. SINGLE CODE**

Less than £10,000 1
£10,000 to less than £15,580 2
£15,580 to less than £40,000 3
£40,000 or more 4
Refused/Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT) 5

D2. What is your current working status? **SHOWCARD Y. SINGLE CODE**

Student/in full-time education 1
Employed Full time (31+ hrs per week).....2
Employed part time (9-30 hrs per week) 3
Self employed 4
Non working/homemaker.....5
Retired 6
Refused.....7

D3. Establish Social Class (from below):

A / B/ C1.....1
C2 / D / E 2

OCCUPATION OF CHIEF WAGE EARNER (Please write in)

DETAILS OF CHIEF INCOME EARNER IN HOUSEHOLD

CIRCLE CODE OR WRITE IN AS APPROPRIATE
DATA SERVICES – DO NOT PUNCH QUESTIONS C1 TO C7

C1.	Working full time	1		**C2**
	Working part time	2		**C2**
	Private Pensions	3		**C9**
	Not working – Housewife	4		**C9**
	Retired state pension only	5		**C9**
	Student	6		**C9**
	Retired with occupational/personal pension	7		**C2**
	Unemployed in last 6 months	8		**C2**
	Unemployed for over 6 months	9		**C9**

C2.JobTitle/Rank _____

C3.Type of Firm/Organisation: _____

C4. C.I.E. is... An Employee **A** Self-Employed **B**

C5. Work is… Manual **A** Non-Manual **B**

C6. Responsible for Other People?

YES **A** NO **B**

C7. > **For How Many**? _____

WORKING STATUS

- ☐ **Non working**
- ☐ **Working part time**
- ☐ **Working full time**
- ☐ **Student**
- ☐ **Retired**

Please tick in boxes as appropriate

SEX: ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

SOCIAL STATUS

A ☐ **B** ☐ **C1** ☐ **C2** ☐ **DE** ☐

D3a. Which of the following best describes the contribution you or your son/daughter/dependents have made towards tuition fees? **SHOWCARD Z - SINGLE CODE**

We/my son/daughter have made no contribution with 100% of tuition fees being paid for by the government 1
We/my son/daughter have made a part contribution with some of the cost of tuition fees being paid for by the government.....2
We/my son/daughter have made a full contribution of £1,175 towards the cost of tuition fees 3
Don't know / Can't remember 4

SHOW CARD

D3b. Which of the categories A-E, best describes your ethnic origin? **SHOWCARD AA - SINGLE CODE**

ONCE RESPONDENT HAS CHOSEN FROM A-E, SAY: And within category (INSERT AS APPROPRIATE), which answer best describes your cultural background?

A. White

British 1
Irish 2
Other 3

B. Mixed

White & Black Caribbean.....4
White & Black African 5
White & Asian 6
Any other mix.....7

C. Asian or Asian British

Indian 8
Pakistani 9
Bangladeshi 10
Other 11

D. Black or Black British

Caribbean 12
African.....13
Other black background 14

E. Chinese or Other Ethnic Background

Chinese.....15
Other (write in) 16

D3c. Would be willing take part in a short follow-up telephone interview if we wanted to re-contact and ask you a few more questions but in a bit more depth? **SINGLE CODE**

Yes.....1 RECORD TELEPHONE NUMBER BELOW
No 2
Don't know 0

THANK AND CLOSE

D4 RECORD GENDER

Male 1
Female 2

D5 RECORD REGION
c) UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE SON/DAUGHTER/DEPENDENT AT
d) LOCAL LEA

	College (a)	Local LEA (b)
North East	1	1
North West	2	2
East Midlands	3	3
West Midlands	4	4
East of England	5	5
South East (excluding Greater London)	6	6
Greater London	7	7
South West	8	8
Yorks/Humber	9	9
Wales	0	0

D6 RECORD UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE TYPE

'Traditional' University.....1
'New' University 2
College of Further Education.....3

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