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**Issues paper**

This report is for information

This report describes the attributes, progression to higher education, achievement within higher education and outcomes after graduation of students who have undertaken access courses. These courses, first established in the late 1970s, remain an important route into higher education for mature entrants: one in four first-time mature entrants to full-time degree programmes still enter via an access course.

# Pathways to higher education

## Access courses

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# Pathways to higher education: Access courses

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

### Purpose

1. To describe the attributes, progression to higher education, achievement within higher education, and outcomes after graduating of students who have undertaken access courses.

### Key points

2. 'Access to Higher Education' courses, first established in the late 1970s, remain an important route into higher education for mature entrants. Though growth in student numbers has been modest in recent years, one in four first-time mature entrants to full-time degree programmes still enter via an access course.
3. We have taken the cohort of students who took access courses in 1998-99 and followed them through further study. This was the most recent cohort for whom, we were able to describe patterns of progression into and through higher education.
4. It was found that, of those starting an access course, more than half continue with some formal study, with 39 per cent on degree or other undergraduate programmes. Typically, the progression from access course to higher education involves a move from a further education college to a higher education institution (HEI). Though the access course students tend to choose an HEI near to their home, this does not mean that students on the same access course programme go to the same HEI. The average one-year access course group will have students going to about 12 different institutions to study at higher education level.
5. Of those who go on to higher education from access courses, most go onto full-time degree courses. They study a wide range of subjects, with 'subjects allied to medicine' being the most popular.
6. Two-thirds of these students from access courses on three or four year full-time degree programmes graduate within five years. This proportion compares favourably with other 'non

A-level' entrants. Further, six months after graduating, of those employed, 78 per cent were in 'graduate' jobs.

7. Given these achievements, we need to consider what potential exists to develop the 'access course' route? Policies are now in place to secure the funding, address the issue of fees and ensure wider recognition of access course qualifications. Together these have the potential to enable access course provision to make an even greater contribution to increasing and widening participation.

### **Action required**

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

## Introduction

9. This is the first of a series of reports providing information on pathways into higher education (HE). The series will describe the alternatives to what historically has been the 'standard' pathway of progression from school or college at aged 18 or 19, having gained A-levels or equivalent qualifications, to the first year of an undergraduate programme of study. There are various alternatives, involving different qualifications and modes of study, and diverse groups of students with differing experiences. In this report we consider just one such alternative: 'Access to Higher Education' courses, which will be simply referred to as 'access courses'.

10. Access courses are investigated in this first report on alternative routes into HE partly for pragmatic reasons; they are relatively easy to identify. They are also important. For example, 25 percent of all the first time mature entrants to full-time degree programmes entered via an access course<sup>1</sup>.

11. Access courses were first established in the late 1970s. They provided an alternative to taking A-levels, often through part-time evening study, or taking a university-specific direct entry examination, for adults intending to enter higher education. At first the initiatives tended to be local, and the recognition of individual access qualifications was typically restricted to a small number of higher education institutions and departments. In 1989 a national framework, developed by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP, the forerunner of Universities UK) and the Council for National Academic Awards, was launched. Responsibility for this scheme passed to the Higher Education Quality Council in 1992 and, in 1997, to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA 2004a).

12. Though this scheme is now in its second decade, some courses still take place outside the national framework. We estimate that in 2003-04 about 10 per cent of access course provision was on schemes outside the QAA recognition process<sup>2</sup>. This is somewhat surprising because, at least in theory if not in practice, gaining recognition should have led to a more favourable funding status. The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA 2003) found a variety of reasons why courses did not have recognition. They could be new innovative programmes which had not been through the recognition procedure, programmes for students under 21, 'fast track' programmes with lower levels of contact time, and so on. In some cases the courses had a narrow focus, for example for particular students, like, say, classroom assistants, preparing for particular programmes in higher education.

13. The QAA has published information about access courses from a variety of sources (QAA 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2005). This includes information about the characteristics of access courses and the students on them, their progression through the UCAS application system, and the courses and students within higher education whose highest qualification on entry

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<sup>1</sup> Based on all full-time first-degree entrants to HEIs in 2003-04 aged 21 or over on 30 September 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Based on access courses in 2002-03 running within institutions that did not have a QAA-recognised access course in 2002-03.

was completion of an access course. What has been missing from these publications is any detailed information on what students do after the access course: whether they progress to higher education and, if they do, where and what they study. There are some summaries of students' intentions while on the access course but, unsurprisingly, these contain a large proportion of 'unknowns'. In this report, as well as providing more information on students on and from access courses, we fill the information gap by providing details of progression from access courses to higher education. This has been made possible by, for the first time, linking the individualised learner records<sup>3</sup> (ILRs) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student records. By creating a single longitudinal record we are able to trace the transition from further to higher education.

14. There are six sections to this report:
  - a. Sources and definitions.
  - b. Trends in student numbers.
  - c. Attributes: course; provider; and student.
  - d. Progression from access courses to higher education programmes.
  - e. Achievement in higher education.
  - f. After graduation: employment outcomes.

## **Sources and definitions**

### **Data sources**

15. Data are drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) individualised learner records (ILRs) from 1998-99 through to 2003-04.

16. Individual students were tracked within and through each annual student dataset using a number of personal characteristics. For exact data definitions and further explanation of how students are tracked, see Annex B.

17. The list of universities and colleges with QAA-recognised courses in 1998-99 was provided by the QAA and is at Annex D.

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<sup>3</sup> From 1998-99 to 2001-02, the main LSC datasets were the individualised student records (ISRs). For this report, we will refer to both the ISR and ILR as the ILR.

## Access courses

18. An access course is designed to prepare mature students who have few or no higher education entry-level qualifications for higher education. The access course itself is a further education (FE) level qualification, which means that both the student support available and funding of the provision is at FE level. Until 2003-04 the majority of access courses only accepted students aged 21 and above; the lower age limit has since been reduced to 19. Most courses take a year to complete, but both shorter and longer courses are reported. Some access courses are designed to allow progress to particular higher education courses, such as Access to Law, others provide more general preparation for higher education.

19. The final qualification of an access course is an Access to Higher Education certificate. These certificates can be awarded through a QAA Authorised Validating Agency (AVA) or through another awarding body. A course which awards access certificates through an AVA is described as a QAA-recognised course. For the purposes of this report, we use the term 'access course' to identify students on both QAA-recognised courses and those from other courses described as 'access'. For further information see the QAA web-pages on access courses<sup>4</sup>.

## Defining the cohorts for analysis

20. We selected students on access courses from the LSC individualised learner record and Higher Education Statistics Agency Record (HESA). This means that provision at adult/community education centres that are not funded through a further education college (FEC) are excluded<sup>5</sup>.

21. The access courses returned on the ILR and HESA records vary in length, intensity and content. For this study, we aim to look at English domiciled students with no recent higher education experience, studying on access courses at FECs and higher education institutions (HEIs) in England of a particular length/intensity which are funded through the LSC.

22. Most of the analysis reported here is for the cohort of students studying on access courses in 1998-99. Where cohorts from later years have been taken, we have stated this.

23. The main difficulty in carrying out this analysis has been to accurately identify which students are on access courses in preparation for higher education. The ILR typically has about 8 to 10 million records, less than 0.5 per cent of which relate to access courses. Further, the access courses have to be identified via a qualifications database, containing around 100,000 qualifications of which only 6,000 are access courses. Clearly there is a significant risk of misidentification. We know from investigations by the LSDA (LSDA 2003) that some colleges with access course provision had not submitted any records identifying students as being on these courses. The approach we have taken for this analysis has been

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<sup>4</sup> 'Access to higher education – A full explanation', [www.qaa.ac.uk/access/full.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/access/full.asp)

<sup>5</sup> Adult/community education centres represent about 5% of providers (QAA 2004). It is not clear what proportion of these are funded through a FEC.



to ensure, as far as possible, that all the records used have referred to students on access courses, at the cost of probably missing some provision.

24. To ensure that, as far as possible, only records relating to access courses are included, we have excluded the following.

**Courses whose level is given as not equivalent to Level 3**

a. A number of courses are recorded as access courses but whose level is not recorded as Level 3 (in other words, those courses one level below HE). For the purpose of this report, we are only examining courses equivalent to Level 3.

**Students not funded by the LSC**

b. We would expect access courses to be funded by the LSC and, where provision is returned as not being so funded, it is more likely that the courses has been wrongly identified as an access course to higher education.

**Students who have experienced higher education in academic years 1997-98 and/or 1998-99**

c. Students who have been or are already in higher education will produce misleading progression rates for access courses.

**LSC funded but not English domiciled**

d. Small in number and could have different characteristics to the rest of the cohort, particularly in terms of progression patterns.

**Short and long courses**

e. We found courses returned with course length of short (six months or less) or long (more than two years), compared with what would normally be expected for an access course. Again, it seemed possible, or even likely, that a high proportion of these were not access courses as we understand them, and they were therefore excluded.

For most of the analysis we also exclude records from colleges which are not listed as providing QAA-recognised courses in 1998-99.

25. Table 1 shows how these exclusions affect our initial count of students on access courses.

26. For most of the analysis reported, we focus on access courses that are expected to last between 6 and 12 months (standard), and between a year and two years (extended). There is some uncertainty about whether courses outside this range are access courses as conventionally understood.

**Table 1 Counts of access course student records: exclusions**

<b>Original population</b>	<b>36,459</b>
Not at Level 3	7,023
Non-LSC funded	1,072
HE provision in 1997 or 1998	725
Not English domiciled	568
Short (<= 6 months)	1,920
Long (> 2 years)	81
<b>Initial access starters</b>	<b>25,070</b>

27. Table 2 shows the distribution of the length of courses at institutions with and without QAA-recognised courses. The analysis looks mainly at the courses which are not shaded in the table.

**Table 2 Counts of access course student records by course length and QAA recognition**

<b>Length of course</b>	<b>Without QAA recognition</b>	<b>With QAA recognition</b>	<b>Total</b>
Standard (> 6 months & <= 1 year)	3,077	19,196	<b>22,273</b>
Extended (> 1 year & <= 2 years)	277	2,520	<b>2,797</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,354</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>25,070</b>

28. For most of the analysis we excluded provision at FECs and HEIs with no QAA-recognised courses in 1998-99. It is possible that a small proportion of the students included in the main analysis will be on courses without QAA recognition. This will occur if a college has both recognised and unrecognised courses. However, we can be sure that the provision at colleges without QAA recognition was not recognised. What is less certain is whether this provision was truly 'access courses' as understood here.

## **Trends in student numbers**

29. Owing to difficulties with identifying and defining access courses, producing an accurate time series of students on access courses is difficult. However we can use two sources of information to help provide an impression of the trend in access student numbers in the recent past.

30. The first is through our analysis of starters to access courses derived from the LSC's individualised learner record. Annex A shows the criteria used to identify starters from the LSC's individualised student record.

31. The second is from the QAA, which conducts an annual survey of the authorised validating agencies; this is used to derive the numbers of students registered on QAA-

recognised courses. Table 3 shows the numbers registered on QAA-recognised access to higher education programmes for the period 1998-99 to 2003-04<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 3 Number of students on access courses to higher education programmes**

Academic year	QAA return of QAA-recognised courses	ILR returns of QAA-recognised courses	ILR returns of all access courses
1998-99	36,132	21,716	25,070
1999-2000	37,729	23,256	26,443
2000-01	38,684	20,848	22,701
2001-02	40,484	20,247	21,910
2002-03	40,218	21,497	23,385
2003-04	45,877	24,490	26,449

32. The returns to the QAA show a steady growth in student numbers on access courses, equating to a 27 per cent increase over the five years 1998-99 to 2003-04. The numbers derived from the ILR are lower and do not show these increases. The ILR/HESA figures in Table 3 are those found after making the exclusions described above (see Table 2). Even without these exclusions, the number of students on QAA-recognised courses in 1998-99, as derived from the ILR data, comes to 30,946. It should be remembered that the ILR figures do not include students who are taught at adult/community education centres that are not funded through an FEC, and, as noted above, we know from LSDA investigations that some colleges fail to correctly identify access courses in their ILR returns. It is therefore unclear whether the lack of sustained growth in the numbers of students from the subset that are analysed here is real, or whether the figures represent increasing difficulties in identifying students on such courses.

## Attributes

### Introduction

33. In this section, we look at particular characteristics of access courses and the students that are on those courses. We separate these characteristics into three groups (which are then further categorised):

- a. Course attributes:
  - i. Subject; and
  - ii. Concurrent study.
  
- b. Location and type of access provider attributes:
  - i. Institution type; and
  - ii. Region of institution.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Access to higher education: Key statistics 2005' – QAA, UCAS, LSC and HESA (2005).  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/access/statistics/2005/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/access/statistics/2005/default.asp)

- c. Student attributes:
  - i. Sex;
  - ii. Age on commencement; and
  - iii. Ethnicity.

34. For analysis of students within higher education, one of the most common distinctions used is whether the student's studies are full- or part-time. However this distinction is less meaningful when considering further education. For the purposes of this assessment of characteristics, we identify the intensity of study on the access course through the expected length of course as defined in paragraphs 26 and 27.

35. The results reported are based on English domiciled students with no recent higher education experience, who began on an access course at FECs and HEIs in England in 1998-99. This cohort contains 19,196 students on standard length access courses and 2,520 on extended length courses.

## Course attributes

### Subject

36. Table 4 shows the numbers of students on access courses by subject group. Over half the students are shown to be on combined courses, either within a wide subject area or quite general. In practice, students may be able to specialise in a particular area on a combined course and, conversely, access courses in a particular subject may be used by students to prepare for a wider range of HE courses.

**Table 4 Access students by subject group**

Single or combined subject-area?	Subject group	Standard		Extended		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Single	Creative arts & design	1,804	9%	251	10%	<b>2,055</b>	<b>9%</b>
	Subjects allied to medicine	1,544	8%	221	9%	<b>1,765</b>	<b>8%</b>
	Social studies	1,099	6%	147	6%	<b>1,246</b>	<b>6%</b>
	Business & administration	759	4%	6	0%	<b>765</b>	<b>4%</b>
	Education	515	3%	29	1%	<b>544</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Computer science	535	3%	0	0%	<b>535</b>	<b>2%</b>
	Engineering & technology	164	1%	9	0%	<b>173</b>	<b>1%</b>
	Humanities/Languages	45	0%	13	1%	<b>58</b>	<b>0%</b>
	Biological sciences	55	0%	0	0%	<b>55</b>	<b>0%</b>
	Mathematical sciences	27	0%	0	0%	<b>27</b>	<b>0%</b>
Architecture & planning	21	0%	0	0%	<b>21</b>	<b>0%</b>	
Combined	Social science	10,770	56%	1,639	65%	<b>12,409</b>	<b>57%</b>
	Science	907	5%	80	3%	<b>987</b>	<b>5%</b>
	Arts	25	0%	0	0%	<b>25</b>	<b>0%</b>
	Other	926	5%	125	5%	<b>1,051</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Concurrent study

37. Table 5 shows that 16 per cent of students on standard length access courses and 7 per cent on extended access courses are studying concurrently for other qualifications. These other qualifications are varied; the most common is A-level provision, which 10 per cent of students on standard length courses and 3 per cent on extended courses are also aiming for.

**Table 5 Access students by other qualifications being studied concurrently**

Concurrent qualifications	Standard		Extended		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
No concurrent study	16,214	84%	2,340	93%	18,554	85%
A-levels	1,854	10%	77	3%	1,931	9%
City and Guilds	48	0%	11	0%	59	0%
Certificate <sup>7</sup>	397	2%	28	1%	425	2%
NVQ/GNVQ	244	1%	21	1%	265	1%
Other qualification	439	2%	43	2%	482	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Type and location of access course provider attributes

#### Institution type

38. Table 6 shows that the majority of access students are registered at further education colleges. 94 per cent of all those starting on standard length access programmes in 1998-99 were registered to an FEC. The corresponding figure for extended length courses was 97 per cent.

**Table 6 Access students by type of institution**

Institution registered at	Standard		Extended		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
HEI	1,142	6%	73	3%	1,215	6%
FEC	18,054	94%	2,447	97%	20,501	94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Region of institution

39. Table 7 shows that almost a third of access students are studying at institutions in the London region (30 per cent). Students who are on extended courses are more evenly spread out across the regions, with only 9 per cent being in London compared with 33 per cent of those on standard length courses.

40. The distribution of numbers of students on access courses is in part explained by the varying regional populations; but even after taking this into account, the London region has much higher participation in higher education. This is especially noteworthy since this region has the highest young participation among the English regions (HEFCE 2005) and the effects

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<sup>7</sup> These can range from a word processing certificate in information technology to a first aid at work certificate.

of graduate migration further increase the proportion of graduates in the London twenty-something population.

**Table 7 Access students by region**

Region	Standard		Extended		Total		Population (20-29) <sup>8</sup>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number (000s)	%
South East	1,945	10%	310	12%	2,255	10%	945	15%
South West	1,553	8%	179	7%	1,732	8%	549	9%
London	6,258	33%	221	9%	6,479	30%	1,257	20%
East of England	944	5%	379	15%	1,323	6%	622	10%
East Midlands	686	4%	252	10%	938	4%	506	8%
West Midlands	1,467	8%	592	23%	2,059	9%	641	10%
Yorkshire/Humberside	1,451	8%	356	14%	1,807	8%	625	10%
North East	1,499	8%	86	3%	1,585	7%	308	5%
North West	3,393	18%	145	6%	3,538	16%	824	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,276</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Student attributes

41. In this section we describe the attributes of students on access courses in terms of their sex, age and ethnicity. We are aware of the wide interest in the socio-economic background of students, and the policy objectives to increase participation by those from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, most access students are mature entrants, and we have no reliable measures of these attributes.

### Sex

42. Table 8 shows that more than two-thirds of students in the 1998-99 cohort were female. This is consistent with the reports from the QAA (QAA 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2005), which show the proportion of women increasing over the period from 70 per cent in 1998-99 to 74 per cent in 2003-04.

43. Those on extended length courses have an even higher proportion of female students than their standard length courses.

**Table 8 Access students by sex**

Sex	Standard		Extended		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	6,412	33%	561	22%	6,973	32%
Female	12,784	67%	1,959	78%	14,743	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>8</sup> Population figures are from the Office of National Statistics, see [www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=9092](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=9092) for further details.

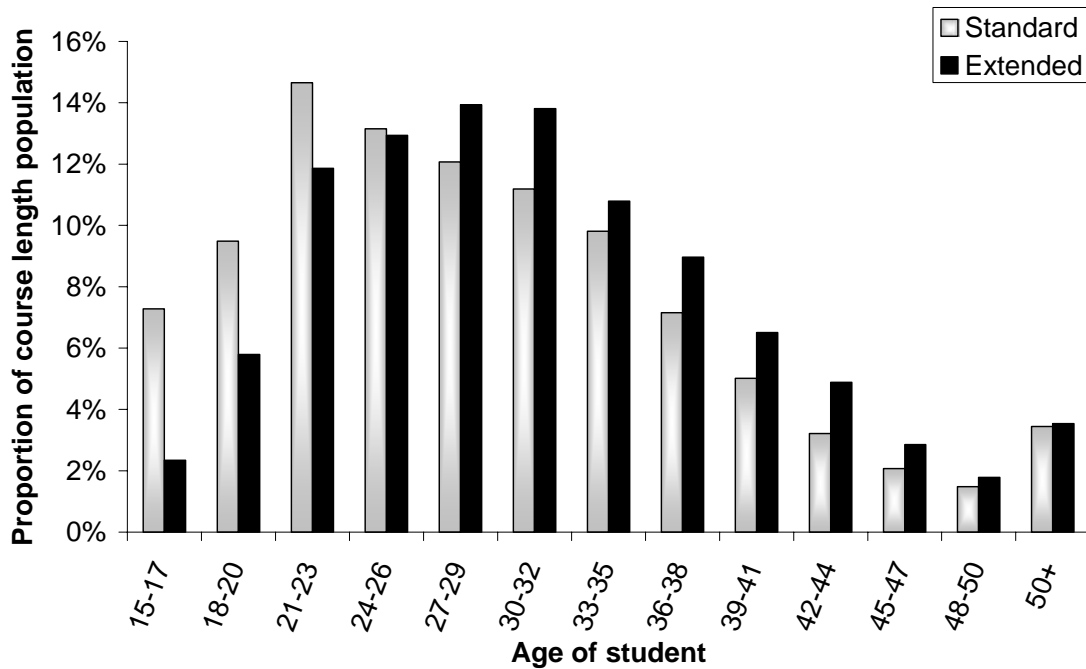
### Age on commencement of course

44. Table 9 and Figure 1 show the different age profiles of access course students. They show that the 'typical' access student is in his or her twenties or early thirties. This is consistent with the figures published by the QAA (QAA 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2005) which showed that in 1998 65 per cent of students were between 21 and 35.

**Table 9 Access students by sex and age**

Age group	Sex	Standard		Extended		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Young (20 and below)	Male	1,372	7%	85	3%	1,457	7%
	Female	1,846	10%	120	5%	1,966	9%
Mature (21 and over)	Male	5,040	26%	476	19%	5,516	25%
	Female	10,938	57%	1,839	73%	12,777	59%
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 1 Access students by age**



### Ethnicity

45. From the data reported here, about one in five access course students (22 per cent of those with known ethnicity) came from an ethnic minority, almost the same as reported by the QAA (20 per cent of those of known ethnicity).

46. Table 10 shows that a larger proportion of students on extended length courses are white.

**Table 10 Access students by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Standard		Extended		Total	
	Number	% known	Number	% known	Number	% known
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	141	1%	0	0%	141	1%
Asian/Asian British – Indian	277	2%	44	2%	321	2%
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	359	2%	42	2%	401	2%
Chinese	91	1%	0	0%	91	0%
Other Asian background	218	1%	11	0%	229	1%
Black/Black British - African	1,403	8%	50	2%	1,453	8%
Black/Black British - Caribbean	956	6%	87	4%	1,043	5%
Other Black background	405	2%	37	2%	442	2%
White	13,133	77%	1991	88%	15,124	78%
Other Ethnic background	57	0%	8	0%	65	0%
<b>Total known</b>	<b>17,040</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,270</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,310</b>	<b>100%</b>
Not known	2,156		250		2,406	
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,196</b>		<b>2,520</b>		<b>21,716</b>	

## Progression from access courses to higher education

### Introduction

47. After ‘starting an access course’ we might view the next milestone in progressing to higher education to be completing the course and gaining an access certificate. However, evidence from the QAA surveys suggest that substantial numbers of students not receiving an access certificate do, nevertheless, have plans to go into HE.

48. At present, robust information on whether individual students gained an access certificate is not available to us<sup>9</sup>. This means that we are unable to distinguish between those gaining a certificate and those who do not. Therefore for all of the analysis here, we show the numbers progressing to higher education who are registered on an access course whether they complete that course or not.

49. The term ‘progression’ implies more than just one episode of study following another. It implies that there were stages of study, with the former (the access course) providing the preparation or groundwork for the subsequent (higher education) study. We do not have independent evidence that this is the case; however, for access courses specifically designed and marketed to prepare students for higher education, it is a reasonable assumption.

50. We have classified an access student’s progression into one of four groups:

<sup>9</sup> Robust data on the total numbers of Access certificates awarded is collected by the QCA.



- a. Registered on a first degree-level course or above at a UK HEI or English FEC. These are referred to simply as 'degree level'.
- b. Registered on another undergraduate level course at a UK HEI or English FEC. This includes students on programmes leading to certificates or diplomas in higher education, HNDs, HNCs, foundation degrees, or institutional undergraduate credits. These are referred to as 'OUG level'.
- c. Registered on a further education (FE) course at a UK HEI or English FEC in a later year. These are referred to as 'FE level'.
- d. Not registered on an undergraduate or FE level course at a UK HEI or English FEC, described as 'no HE or FE'.

We refer to both 'degree level' ('a') and 'OUG level' ('b') taken together as undergraduate level (UG).

51. On leaving an access course a student could progress onto another FE course (c), then to, say, an HND (b) and finally onto a degree programme (a). We do not present such details, but only show the highest level study. The focus of this analysis is progression to higher education – levels a and b above – though we provide summary statistics on numbers of students who have studied further at FE level (level c) but no higher. References to 'No HE' represents students who fall into levels below b.

52. The results in this section refer to being registered on the course before 1 August 2004, having started on an access course in academic year 1998-99.

53. Our analysis of progression from an access course is split by a number of characteristics of the progression as listed below:

- a. Overall progression characteristics.
- b. Relationship between the access course provider and institution of HE study.
- c. Characteristics of access course providers.
- d. Characteristics of access courses.
- e. Characteristics of access students.

54. For sections c, d and e on the characteristics of providers, courses and students, any breakdowns that produce tables with less than 50 people in any particular cell are given in Annex E. Where appropriate, an aggregated table is given in the main text (marked as 'aggregated' in the title). This is because tables that contain cells with small numbers can cause progression rates to be highly sensitive to random variation and be potentially misleading.

## Overall progression characteristics

55. Table 11 shows the progression to higher education by length of a student's access course. It shows that 39 per cent of those who began on a standard length access course in 1998-99 registered on an undergraduate course in an HEI before 1 August 2004. A further 2,965 (15 per cent) are registered on a further education level course, which means that more than half (54 per cent) are continuing with some form of formal study.

56. The corresponding figure for students on an extended length course is 31 per cent. This is lower than the equivalent figure for a standard length course, but this is partially explained through the reduced time available for students on extended length courses to enter HE.

**Table 11 Progression of access students by length of access course**

Length	Degree level	OUG		No HE or FE	Total	% Degree UG	
		level	FE level				
Standard	5,957	1,624	2,965	8,650	19,196	31%	39%
Extended	525	267	552	1,176	2,520	21%	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,482</b>	<b>1,891</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>9,826</b>	<b>21,716</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>39%</b>

57. Table 12 shows the mode of HE study for those students who progress into HE. It shows that the majority of students who move into HE from access courses, study on full-time HE courses (84 per cent).

**Table 12 Mode of HE study for those access students who move into HE**

Length	HE study mode		Total	% to full-time HE study
	Full-time	Part-time		
Standard	6,497	1,084	7,581	86%
Extended	578	214	792	73%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,075</b>	<b>1,298</b>	<b>8,373</b>	<b>84%</b>

58. As we can see from Table 11, 23 per cent of those students progressing to HE study take a non degree-level programme. Table 13 shows how this 'other UG study' is made up. Note that, over the period covered by this study, almost all students studying with the Open University were returned as studying for undergraduate credits.

**Table 13 Other UG programmes taken by students from access courses**

Type of other undergraduate course	No. students	%
Full-time diploma courses in subjects allied to medicine	688	36%
Open University programmes	191	10%
HND/HNC	464	25%
Other	548	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,891</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Time to progress from access course to HE

59. Figure 2 shows the proportion of our cohort that has moved into higher education by academic year of higher education entry. It shows that a significant number of those who commenced an access course in 1998-99 have moved into higher education by the end of the 1999-2000 academic year.

60. It shows that around a quarter of those who began on a standard length access course in 1998-99 progressed to undergraduate study in 1999-2000. When considering progression to degree studies only, this figure drops to around one in five.

61. The pattern of progression for those on extended length courses is similar to the standard length courses, but is delayed by a year and the progression rates are slightly lower.

**Figure 2 Time to higher education progression**

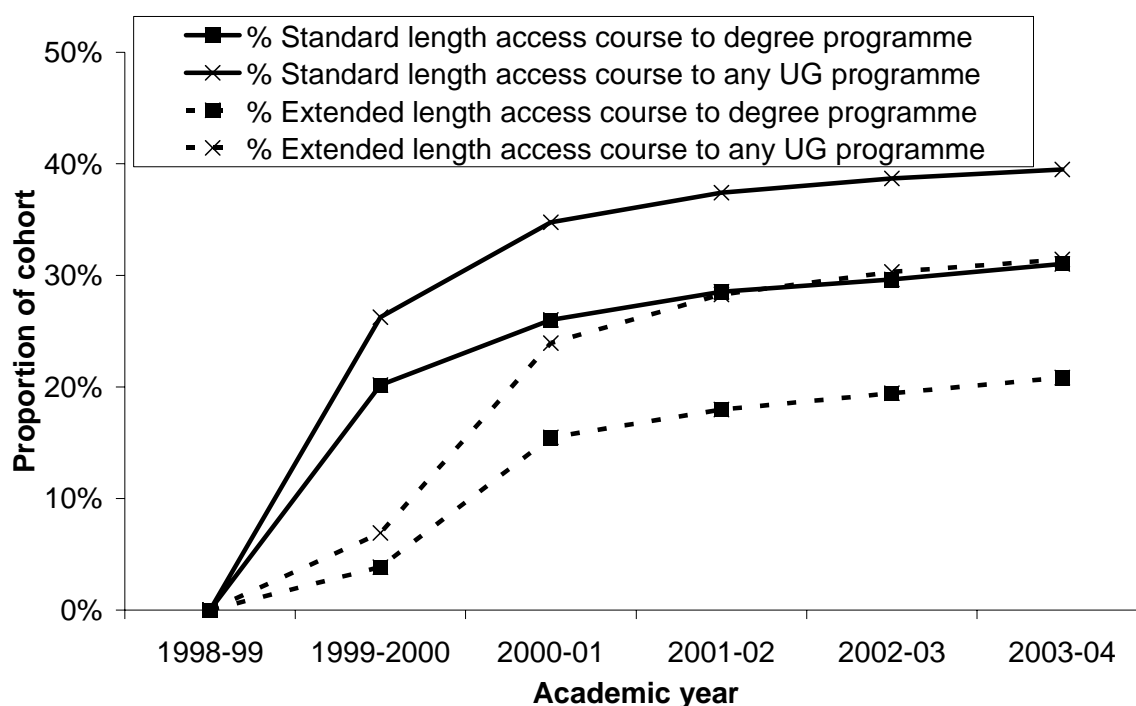


Figure 2 notes: The 1998-99 figure is zero by definition as students who are on a HE course in 1998-99 have been excluded for the whole population.

62. Table 14 shows the rates of progression into degree and other undergraduate studies in the year following commencement on an access course for different starting cohorts (commencing access programmes in 1998-99, 1999-99, 2000-01, 2001-02 or 2002-03). The table shows that the proportion of students progressing into higher education in the year following an access course is relatively stable across the cohorts.

63. Table 15 is the equivalent to Table 14 for the two years following commencement of an access course. This two-year rate is also stable for different cohorts of students.

**Table 14 Progression in the year following an access course, 1998-99 to 2002-03**

Length	1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02		2002-03	
	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG
Standard	20%	26%	20%	28%	23%	31%	23%	31%	21%	28%
Extended	4%	7%	3%	6%	4%	7%	4%	9%	4%	6%

**Table 15 Progression in the two years following an access course, 1998-99 to 2001-02**

Length	1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG	% Degree	% UG
Standard	26%	35%	26%	36%	27%	38%	27%	38%
Extended	15%	24%	14%	23%	16%	24%	16%	25%

## Relationship between the access course provider and institution of HE study

### 'From college to university'

64. The progression from access course to higher education almost always involves a move from a further education college to a university, usually a 'new' university. Table 16 shows the institution type for the 8,373 access students who progressed to HE before the end of 2003-04.

**Table 16 Institution type for access and HE study**

Access study	HE study			Total
	FEC	Pre-1992 HEI	Post-1992 HEI	
FEC	352	2,145	5,309	<b>7,806</b>
HEI	8	37	522	<b>567</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>5,831</b>	<b>8,373</b>

65. There may be some kind of relationship, such as a progression arrangement, between the college or HEI that the student registers with for the access course and the type of institution for HE study. In some cases the HE study may be franchised, typically from an HEI to an FEC. Under such arrangements, the student would be registered at the HEI but would undertake some or all of their study at the FEC. (In principle, such arrangements could also be made for the access course provision itself though there is no evidence of this from the student records.) It is possible for a student to formally change their institution while actually studying in the same place. However, even when such arrangements are taken into account, Table 17 shows that 91 per cent of students actually change the place of study and the institution where they are registered.

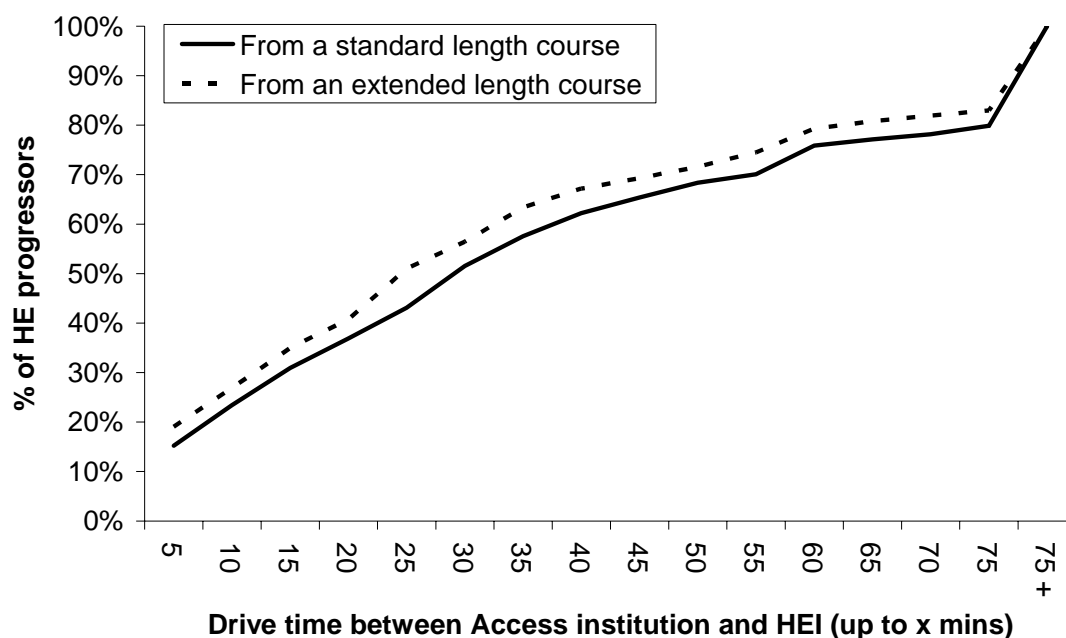
**Table 17 Registering institution and the place of study**

Place of study	Registering institution	Number of students	%
Different	Different	7,668	91%
Different	Same	0	0%
Same	Different	147	2%
Same	Same	558	7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>8,373</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Distances and the place of study move**

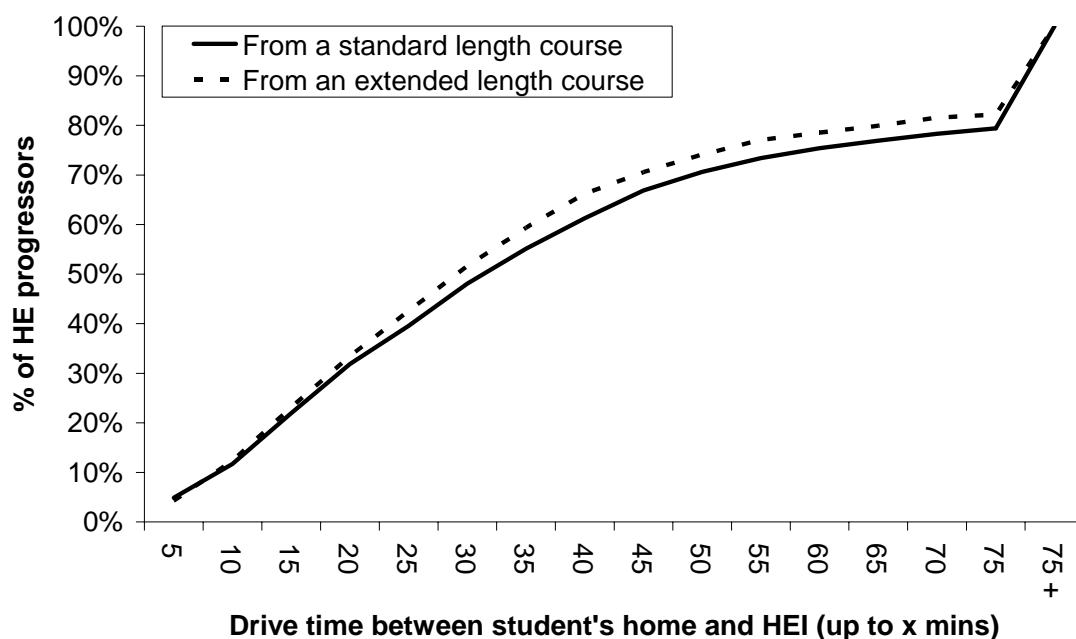
66. For students who physically move institutions on progressing from access to HE study, we can see how far they travel. Figure 3 relates to access students who progress into higher education, and shows the proximity of the institution of their HE studies to the institution at which they undertook their access course. We see that around 70 per cent of students on standard length access courses move to an HEI within 40 driving minutes of the location of their access provision. The pattern is similar for those who began on extended length courses.

**Figure 3 Distance between access institution and HEI for higher education progressors**



67. Figure 3 implies that most access students require, or at least would prefer, to progress to HE study at an institution near their home. This is confirmed by Figure 4, which show the distribution of drive times from the student's home to their place of HE study.

**Figure 4 Distribution of drive times between a student's home and their HEI**



### Characteristics of access course providers

68. In this section we compare different types of access course providers and progression of their students to HE.

#### Progression of access to HE by type of provider (FEC/HEI)

69. Table 18 shows the progression rates into HE split by the type of provider that the student attended<sup>10</sup> for their access course. It shows that for standard length courses, students registered at an HEI have higher rates of progression to HE. Nearly half the students (47 per cent) who are registered at an HEI progress into some type of undergraduate provision within six years of starting their standard length access course.

**Table 18<sup>11</sup> Progression of students by type of provider of the student's access course (aggregated)**

Length of course	Type of provider for access	Degree level			No HE	Total	% Degree	
		Degree level	OUG level	No HE			% Degree	% UG
Standard	FEC	5,527	1,519	11,008	<b>18,054</b>	31%	39%	
	HEI	430	105	607	<b>1,142</b>	38%	47%	
Extended		525	267	1,728	<b>2,520</b>	21%	31%	

<sup>10</sup> In all cases the students were registered with the institution they attended.

<sup>11</sup> Annex E, Table E1 gives a more disaggregated version of this table.

### Progression of access to HE by QAA recognition of provider

70. Table 18 excludes students on access programmes that are at institutions and colleges without a QAA-recognised access course in 1998-99. Table 19 shows the proportion of such students who progress into HE. It can be seen that, in comparison to institutions and colleges with QAA-recognised access courses, progression rates to undergraduate and degree-level are much lower.

71. For example, for those on standard length access courses, just under a third of students at institutions and colleges with a recognised course progressed to degree level. The equivalent figure for those attending institutions and colleges without a recognised course is around one in five students.

72. As with short access courses, it is not clear whether the lower rates of progression for unrecognised access courses are real, or are due to the inclusion of courses which are not 'Access to Higher Education courses' as usually understood.

**Table 19<sup>12</sup> Progression of students by QAA recognition of provider (aggregated)**

Length of course	QAA recognition	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
Standard	Yes	5,957	1,624	11,615	<b>19,196</b>	31%	39%
	No	589	217	2,271	<b>3,077</b>	19%	26%
Extended		550	292	1,955	<b>2,797</b>	20%	30%

### Progression of access to HE by region of provider

73. Table 20 shows the rates of progression to higher education, split by region of the student's access institution, for those students who began standard length access courses in 1998-99. It shows that the North West region has the highest rates of progression to higher education: half of its access students on standard length courses progress onto an undergraduate course.

**Table 20 Progression of students on a standard length course by region of institution**

Region of institution	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
South East	694	140	1,111	<b>1,945</b>	36%	43%
South West	522	142	889	<b>1,553</b>	34%	43%
London	1,664	496	4,098	<b>6,258</b>	27%	35%
East of England	274	82	588	<b>944</b>	29%	38%
East Midlands	214	65	407	<b>686</b>	31%	41%
West Midlands	351	172	944	<b>1,467</b>	24%	36%
Yorkshire & Humberside	405	140	906	<b>1,451</b>	28%	38%
North East	381	135	983	<b>1,499</b>	25%	34%
North West	1,452	252	1,689	<b>3,393</b>	43%	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

<sup>12</sup> Annex E, Table E2 gives a more disaggregated version of this table.

74. The equivalent table for extended length courses is not reported in the main text due to small numbers; Table E3 at Annex E gives these data.

### Progression of access to HE rates for individual providers

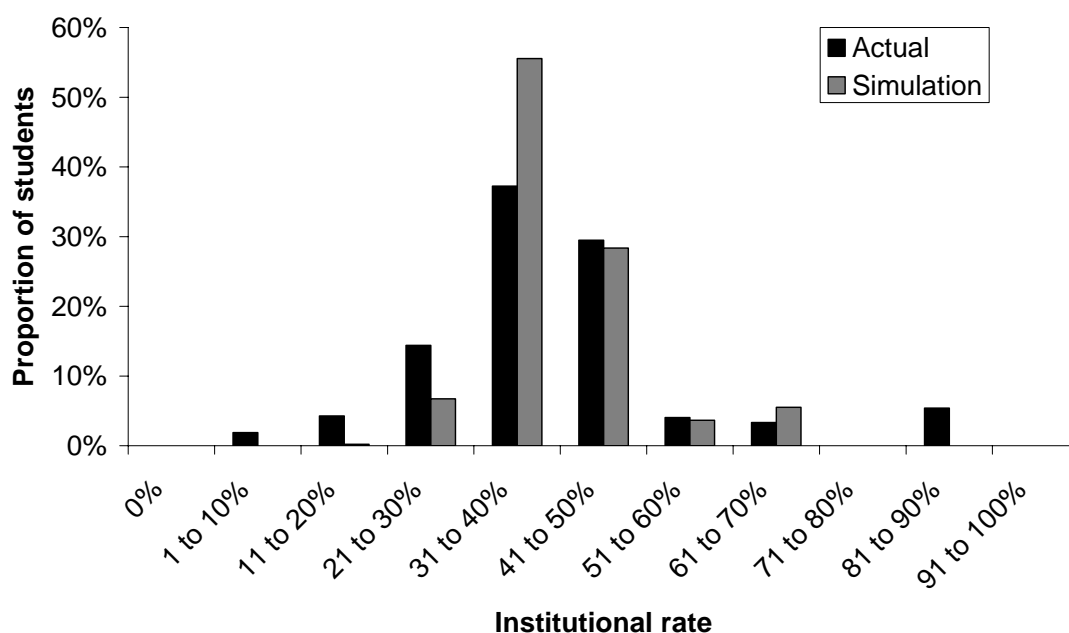
75. Figure 5 shows the institutional progression rates to higher education within six years for students on standard length access courses (actual). It shows that the institutional rates vary between 6 per cent and 82 per cent, though the majority are between 20 and 50 per cent.

76. We would not expect progression rates to be the same among different institutions, or from year to year, in part because of chance variation and in part because of differing characteristics of students and courses. Figure 5 also shows the results of a simulation showing what institutional rates would be expected to look like if all institutions had the same underlying progression rates after taking into account the following factors:

- the subject of the access courses being studied at the institution
- the age and the sex of the access students attending the institution.

Since the actual institutional variation is greater than the simulation, there must be other differences by institution in the propensity to progress to HE.

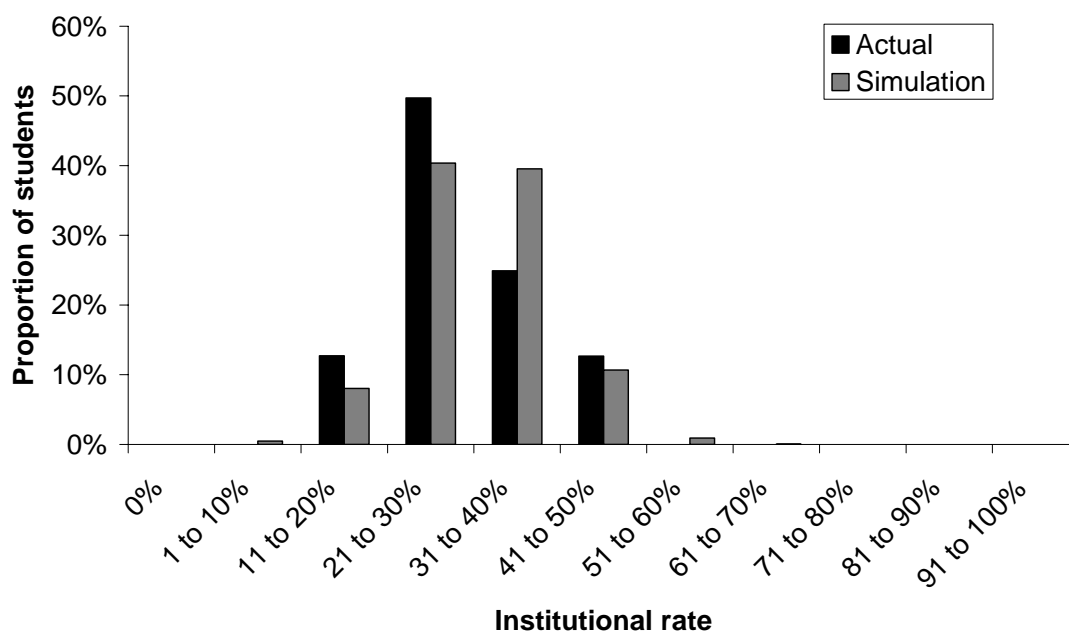
**Figure 5 Institutional progression rates for access students on standard length courses**



77. Figure 6 is the equivalent to Figure 5 for students on extended length access courses. It shows that institutional rates can vary between 17 and 50 per cent, but that this range is broadly what we would expect given random variations and differences in subject of the access courses being studied and the age and sex of the students on those courses.



**Figure 6 Institutional progression rates for access students on extended length courses**



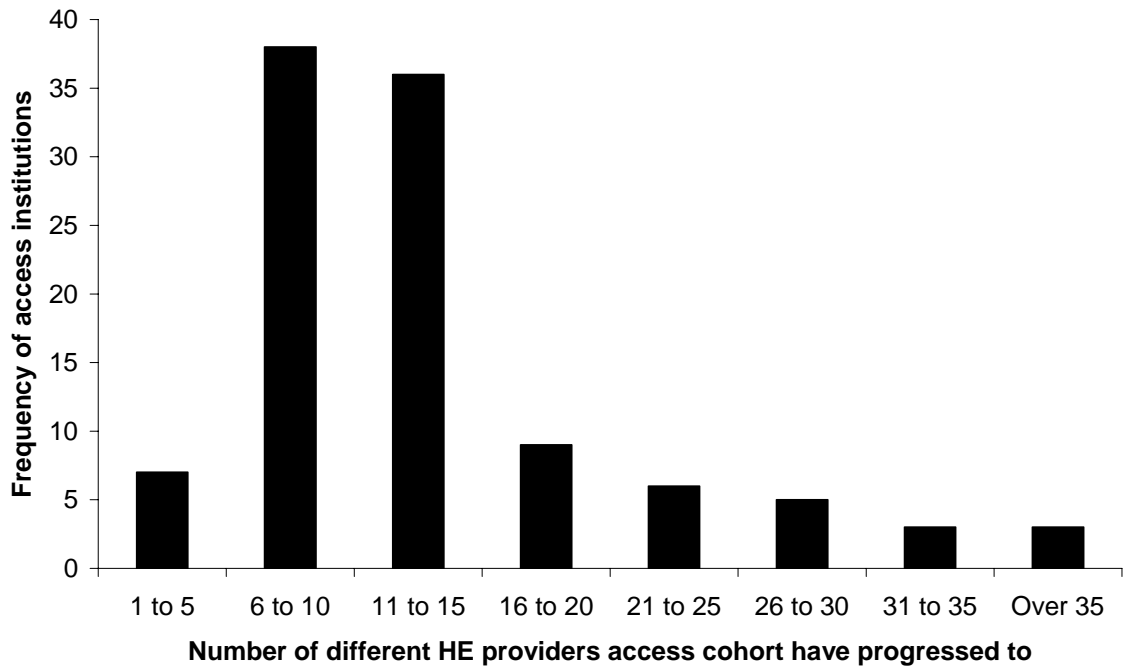
**Where students progress to**

78. We have seen that students usually change institutions in progressing from an access course to higher education, typically going ‘from college to university’ (see Table 16). The question arises as to whether students from a particular college tend to progress to the same university, perhaps reflecting a special relationship between the two institutions?

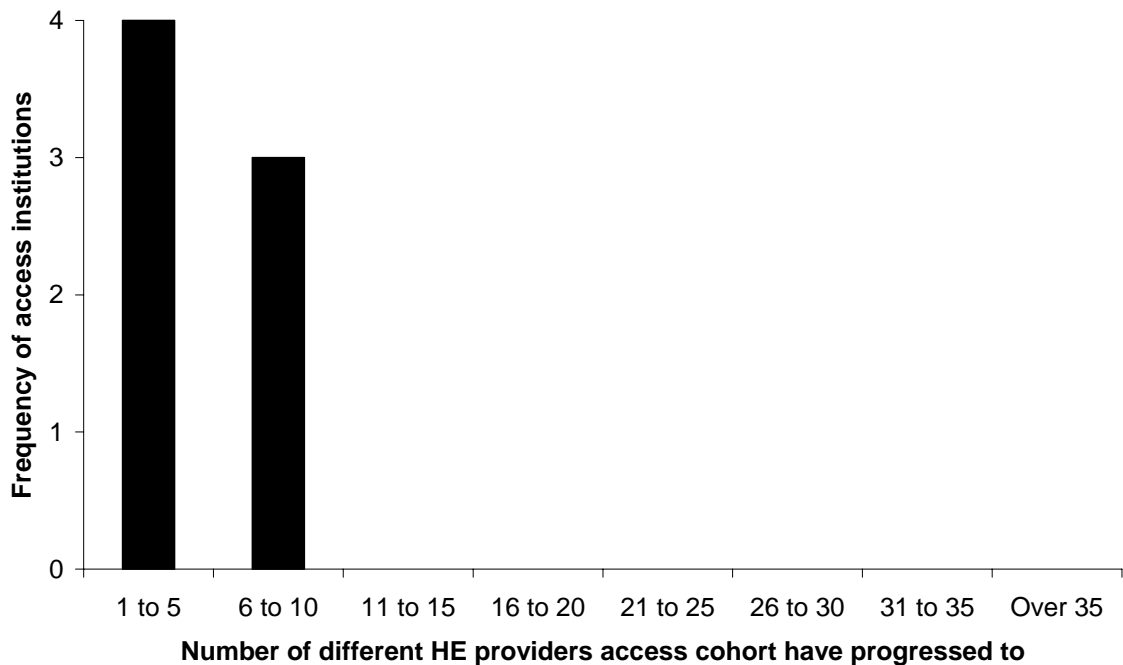
79. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the number of HEIs/FECs that progressors from standard length courses attend, grouping students by their access institution. (Note that only institutions with 20 or more access students progressing to HE are included.) The median number of HEIs is 12, representing those access institutions where students from their 1998-99 cohort went to one of 12 HEIs upon HE progression. No HEIs or FECs had their entire access cohort from 1998-99 progressing to the same HEI/FEC.

80. Figure 8 shows the equivalent data for progressors from extended length courses. The numbers of destination institutions is smaller than for the standard length courses, as expected given the lower number of students on extended length courses. As for standard length courses, no HEIs or FECs had all their students progressing to the same institution.

**Figure 7 Distribution of the number of HEIs/FECs attended (standard length course progressors)**



**Figure 8 Distribution of the number of HEIs attended (extended length course progressors)**



### **Characteristics of access courses**

81. Table 4 showed the distribution of subjects of study on access courses, with a majority of students taking a combination of subjects. In this section we look at progression rates to HE for students on access courses in particular subjects, and then we consider the

relationship between the subject of study for the access course and the subject studied at HE level.

82. Finally we examine the progression characteristics of access courses when they are studied in combination with other FE level study.

### **Progression to HE and access course subject of study**

83. Table 21 shows the rates of progression to higher education, split by access programme subject area, for those students who began on standard length access courses in 1998-99.

84. The lowest rates of progression to higher education degree programmes are in subjects allied to medicine (17 per cent). This is because these students are usually studying for nursing qualifications and tend to move onto nursing diplomas: 22 per cent of those in subjects allied to medicine move onto other (non-degree) undergraduate courses (see Table 13 for more information).

85. The lowest rates of progression to any undergraduate programme are in the creative arts, where 28 per cent of access students progress. This relatively low rate of progression to HE cannot be explained by an increased rate of progression to FE programmes: 16 per cent of creative art students progress to another FE course, which is the same as the average across the whole cohort<sup>13</sup>.

**Table 21<sup>14</sup> Progression of access students on a standard length course by access course subject area (aggregated)**

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Creative arts & design	403	99	1,302	<b>1,804</b>	22%	28%
Subjects allied to medicine	268	336	940	<b>1,544</b>	17%	39%
Social studies	292	84	723	<b>1,099</b>	27%	34%
Other single subjects	675	115	1,331	<b>2,121</b>	32%	37%
Combined: Social science	3,724	834	6,212	<b>10,770</b>	35%	42%
Combined: Science	298	77	532	<b>907</b>	33%	41%
Combined: Other	297	79	575	<b>951</b>	31%	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	31%	39%

86. See Annex E, Table E5 for the equivalent table for extended length access courses.

<sup>13</sup> This relatively low rate of progression to HE cannot be explained by foundation years as we confirmed through discussions with access course providers that most students who have studied on access courses with a focus on art and design progress directly to HE study rather than first doing a foundation year

<sup>14</sup> Annex E, Table E4 gives a more disaggregated version of this table.

### Subject of study at HE level

87. Table 22 shows what subjects are studied by those access students who move into HE study. It shows that 21 per cent of all access students go on to study an HE course related to a subject allied to medicine.

**Table 22 HE subjects studied by those access students who move into HE**

<b>HE subject</b>	<b>No. students</b>	<b>%</b>
Subjects allied to medicine	1,784	21%
Social studies	1,016	12%
Creative arts & design	847	10%
Maths/computer science	675	8%
Biological sciences	476	6%
Business	454	5%
Languages	457	5%
Humanities	332	4%
Law	260	3%
Education	241	3%
Engineering	226	3%
Physical sciences	190	2%
Librarianship & information science	146	2%
Architecture, building & planning	64	1%
Agriculture & related subjects	24	0%
Medicine or veterinary science	21	0%
Combined: Science	113	1%
Combined: Social science	71	1%
Combined: Arts	53	1%
Combined: Other	923	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,373</b>	<b>100%</b>

### The relationship between subjects studied on access courses and subjects studied at HE level

88. Table 23 shows which was the most popular HE subject areas for those students who moved into HE, split by access course subject area. It shows for all the single subjects identified, the most favoured HE course is the one that relates directly to the student's original access course subject area. For example, of those who moved into HE from an access course based around subjects allied to medicine, 82 per cent studied a subject allied to medicine at HE level also.

**Table 23 Most popular HE subjects studied for those access students who move into HE**

<b>Access subject</b>	<b>No. students</b>	<b>Most popular HE subject</b>	<b>No. students</b>	<b>% of progressors</b>
Creative arts & design	562	Same as access	420	75%
Allied to medicine	675	Same as access	553	82%
Social studies	418	Same as access	165	39%
Business	251	Same as access	110	44%
Maths/computing	195	Same as access	130	67%
Education	259	Same as access	54	21%
Other single subjects	109	Engineering	22	20%
Combined: Social science	5,100	Allied to medicine	911	18%
Combined: Science	390	Allied to medicine	171	44%
Combined: Other	414	Creative arts & design	130	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,373</b>	<b>Allied to medicine</b>	<b>1,784</b>	<b>21%</b>

**Progression to HE from access courses with other FE level study**

89. Table 5 above showed that a minority of students on access courses were also studying for other qualifications. In this section we look at the progression to higher education and its relationship with such concurrent study.

90. Table 24 shows the rates of progression to higher education for students from standard length access courses split by whether the student is studying other qualifications in 1998-99 as well as their access course. The table shows that those who studied on both an access course and A-level provision in 1998-99 have the highest rates of progression to higher education: 63 per cent move to a degree course, and a further 6 per cent move to another level of undergraduate course.

**Table 24<sup>15</sup> Progression of students on a standard length course by other qualifications being studied concurrently (aggregated)**

<b>Concurrent qualifications</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Access course only	4,389	1,381	10,444	<b>16,214</b>	27%	36%
With A-level provision	1,170	118	566	<b>1,854</b>	63%	46%
With any other qualification	398	125	605	<b>1,128</b>	35%	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>%</b>

91. The equivalent table for those students on an extended length course is not provided because the large majority of these are studying on an access course only.

<sup>15</sup> Annex E, Table E6 gives a more disaggregated version of this table.

## Characteristics of access students

92. Tables 8, 9 and 10 showed the profile of students on access courses by sex, age and ethnicity. In this section the rates of progression of students are set out for each of these attributes. It should be stressed that we are not implying that any differences are due to these attributes; we are not attempting to make 'like for like' comparisons taking account of other differences like, for example, the subject mix.

### Sex

93. Table 25 shows the rates of progression to higher education, split by sex, for those students who began on standard length access courses in 1998-99. It shows that the progression rate to any undergraduate course is higher for females than males: 41 per cent of females progress to an undergraduate course, compared to 37 per cent of males. This difference is explained by the high proportion of women taking diplomas in subjects allied to medicine

94. For progression onto degree courses, it shows that 31 per cent of males progress by the end of academic year 2002-03. The corresponding figure for females is the same.

**Table 25 Progression of students on a standard length access course by sex**

Sex	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
Male	1,997	371	4,044	<b>6,412</b>	31%	37%
Female	3,960	1,253	7,571	<b>12,784</b>	31%	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

95. See Annex E, Table E7 for the equivalent extended length course table.

### Progression by age at commencement of access course

96. Table 26 shows the progression rates to higher education split by young and mature students when considering standard-length courses. It shows that young students have higher rates of progression to both degree and other undergraduate courses.

**Table 26 Progression of students on a standard length access course by age**

Age	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
Young(20 and below)	1,582	201	1,435	<b>3,218</b>	49%	55%
Mature (21 and over)	4,375	1,423	10,180	<b>15,978</b>	27%	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

97. See Annex E, Table E8 for the equivalent extended length course table.

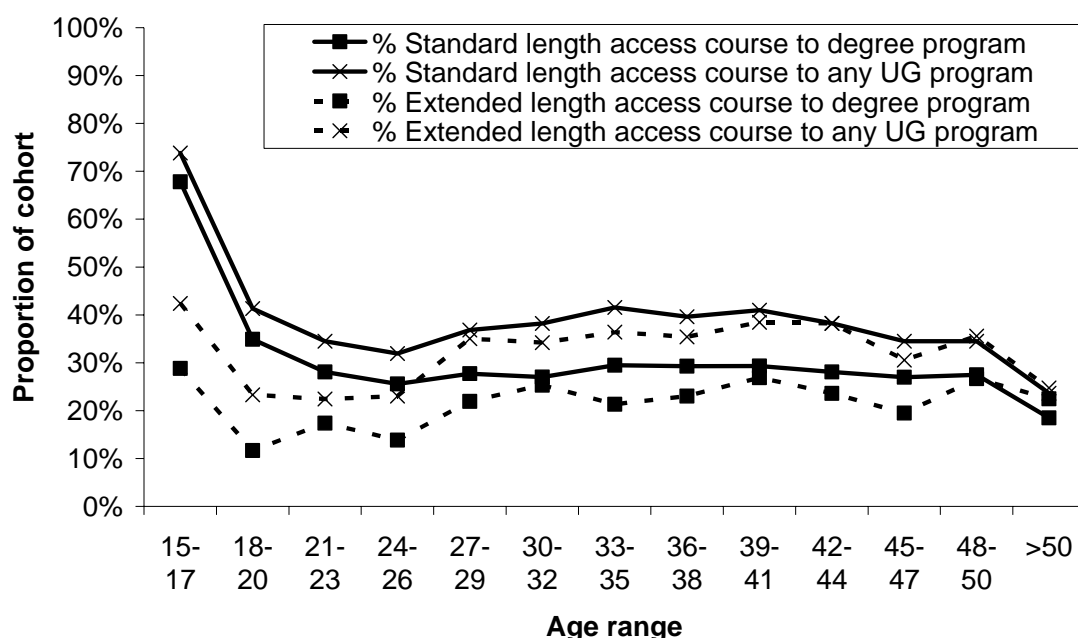
98. For standard length courses only, we further break down the progression to HE for the cohort into age group and sex of the student in Table 27. It shows that the highest rates of progression are among young males. However for mature students, females experience higher rates of progression in comparison to males in the same age group.

**Table 27 Progression of students on a standard length access course by age and sex**

Age group	Sex	Degree level	OUG level		Total	% Degree	% UG
			No HE				
Young (20 and below)	Male	690	91	591	<b>1,372</b>	50%	57%
	Female	892	110	844		<b>1,846</b>	48%
Mature (21 and over)	Male	1,307	280	3,453	<b>5,040</b>	26%	31%
	Female	3,068	1,143	6,727		<b>10,938</b>	28%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	31%	39%

99. Figure 9 shows finer detail on the effect of age on progression rates. It shows how rates vary depending on the exact age of the student at the commencement of their access programme and length of access course.

**Figure 9 Progression of access students by age at commencement of course**



**Progression by ethnicity**

100. Table 28 shows the rates of progression to higher education, split by ethnicity, for students who began on standard length access courses in 1998-99. It shows that the lowest rates of progression to higher education are seen for those whose ethnicity is unknown or not listed.

**Table 28<sup>16</sup> Progression of students on a standard length access course by ethnicity (aggregated)**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Asian/Asian British	314	71	701	<b>1,086</b>	29%	35%
Black/Black British	787	276	1,701	<b>2,764</b>	28%	38%
White	4,272	1,112	7,749	<b>13,133</b>	33%	41%
Other or unknown	584	165	1,464	<b>2,213</b>	26%	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

101. See Annex E, Table E10 for the equivalent extended length course table.

## **Achievement in higher education**

102. Progression from an access course to higher education is only the first step in gaining a higher education qualification. In this section we consider only those students who progressed immediately from their access course in 1998-99 to a three or four year full-time undergraduate course in 1999-2000 as mature entrants to an HEI. We are restricting our work to this subset of the 1998-99 cohort because, unlike other groups, we have enough data to track its subsequent achievements, and these achievements are relatively straightforward to identify.

103. This group represents 41 per cent of all those who were identified as progressing to HE as shown in Table 29. The table shows that the majority of excluded students from this analysis of achievement are excluded because they progress to HE after academic year 1999-2000. Other students who progress to HE in 1999-2000 have also been excluded. The reasons for these exclusions are that the student progressed to:

- another undergraduate course rather than a first degree
- a part-time first degree rather than a full-time one
- a full-time first degree whose expected length was not three or four years
- a full-time first degree registered at an FEC
- a full-time first degree where they qualified within two years of commencing.

Table 29 shows the numbers of students affected by these exclusions.

104. The measures of HE achievements are the degree qualification rates after five years. These are not comparable to those given in the HEFCE performance indicators<sup>17</sup>, which are

<sup>16</sup> Annex E, Table E9 gives a more disaggregated version of this table.



based on projections. The relatively short period means that there is only a limited opportunity for students to take a year out, move to part-time study, and to repeat a year and be included as a qualifier. We can therefore expect the eventual qualification rates to be somewhat higher.

**Table 29 Exclusions from achievement cohort**

<b>Total progressors to HE</b>	<b>8,373</b>
Progress after 1999-2000	3,160
Progress to OUG only	1,244
Progress to a part-time first-degree	267
Other exclusions (length, FEC, early qualifier)	247
<b>Full-time first degree starters from 1998-99 access course</b>	<b>3,455</b>

105. To fully explore the relative achievement of students from access courses compared with those entering HE with other types of qualification would involve developing a model which is beyond the scope of the current study. However, to provide a basic comparison we provide qualification rates for other English-domiciled entrants<sup>18</sup> from the year 1999-2000. For these other students, we provide both the actual rates and rates adjusted to match the profile of access course entrants with respect to length of HE course, subject, age and sex<sup>19</sup>. These are shown in Table 30.

**Table 30 Five-year first-degree qualification rates by qualification on entry**

Qualification on entry	No. students		Qualification rate	
	Initial cohort	Qualifiers	Actual	Access adjusted
1 to 10 A-level points	35,276	25,137	71%	69%
11 to 20 A-level pts	55,248	46,124	83%	75%
21 to 30 A-level pts	57,729	53,849	93%	78%
Access from 1998-99	3,455	2,267	66%	66%
Access prior to 1998-99	5,339	3,225	60%	61%
BTEC	7,060	4,738	67%	62%
Higher education	9,612	5,758	60%	59%
Other	33,699	21,492	64%	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>207,418</b>	<b>162,590</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>n/a</b>

Table 30 notes: 'Access prior to 1998-99' represents students whose entry qualifications were recorded as access on their HESA records but they were not matched to an access course record in 1998-99.

<sup>17</sup> HEFCE 2002/52 'Performance indicators in higher education', Table 5, [www.hefce.ac.uk/Learning/perfind/2002/download/t5.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Learning/perfind/2002/download/t5.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Students commencing on a full-time first degree in 1999-2000 with expected length of three or four years. Students who gain a first-degree qualification in either 1999-2000 or 2000-01 have been excluded.

<sup>19</sup> Adjusted figures based on assuming rates of qualification in each category remain the same as actual, but the profile of students for each qualification on entry group changes to that of the 'Access from 1998-99' group.

106. The A-level entrants, grouped by number of points, illustrate how the adjustment works. In all three groups the adjusted figures are lower than the actuals, largely reflecting the fact that the age profile of students with access qualifications is older, and older students have lower qualification rates. We also find that the range for actuals is much larger (93% - 71% = 22%) than for the adjusted (78% - 69% = 9%). This shows that the relationship between A-level grades and HE achievement is much weaker for mature than for young students.

107. There are two groups of students from access courses: 'Access from 1998-99' and 'Access prior to 1998-99'. The first group relates to students who have been identified as being on access courses and have been described through this report. Students in the second group were recorded as having access courses as their highest qualification on entry on their HESA records, but they were not matched to an access course record in 1998-99. This second group is included for completeness, though these students' actual experience and achievement prior to HE is uncertain.

108. We see that 66 per cent of students who progressed to a full-time first degree in 1999-2000 from an access course in 1998-99 gain a first degree within five years of commencing. This is lower than for A-level entrants. However, when we adjust for length of HE course, subject, age and sex we see that the differences are much reduced, with access course students being very similar to students with lower A-level points.

109. Table 30 also shows that students whose qualification on entry was a BTEC have a marginally higher qualification rate than students from an access course in 1998-99: 67 per cent. However the adjusted qualification rate shows that this group of BTEC students would have been expected to have a lower qualification rate (62 per cent) if their characteristics had been similar to the access from 1998-99 group (in terms of length of HE course, sex, subject of HE study and age).

110. Access course students have higher qualification rates than students with HE qualifications and 'other' qualifications, both in absolute terms and using adjusted figures. 'Other' includes those without A-levels, access, BTEC or HE qualifications.

## **After graduation: employment outcomes**

111. For those students who graduated in 2003-04 or earlier, we can use the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey to find out what the graduates subsequently did. Again we provide a basic comparison between access and other groups of mature entrants.

112. Table 31 shows the destination of the graduates from our full-time first-degree population (as defined in paragraphs 102-103,) six months after graduating. It shows that the group with the lowest unemployment rate (7 per cent) are students who began a first degree with between 21 and 30 A-level points. The corresponding unemployment rate for access entry students is 13 per cent, which is similar to the rate seen for BTECs and other unlisted qualifications on entry. (See Annex F for full definition of 'unemployed').

**Table 31 Destination of graduates six months after graduating**

<b>Qualifications on entry</b>	<b>Employed or studying</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>No response or undefined</b>	<b>Graduates</b>	<b>% unemployed (known)</b>
1 to 10 A-level points	17,135	1,700	6,302	<b>25,137</b>	9%
11 to 20 A-level points	33,201	2,876	10,047	<b>46,124</b>	8%
21 to 30 A-level points	39,767	2,994	11,088	<b>53,849</b>	7%
Access from 1998-99	1,387	215	665	<b>2,267</b>	13%
Access prior to 1998-99	1,932	280	1,013	<b>3,225</b>	13%
BTEC	3,021	461	1,256	<b>4,738</b>	13%
Higher education	3,580	400	1,778	<b>5,758</b>	10%
Other	13,512	1,844	6,136	<b>21,492</b>	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113,535</b>	<b>10,770</b>	<b>38,285</b>	<b>162,590</b>	<b>9%</b>

113. However the rates given in Table 31 do not take into account the differing characteristics of each group. As in paragraphs 105-106, we can standardise these rates relative to the characteristics of those students who entered through an access course in 1998-99. Table 32 shows the actual and access-adjusted unemployment rates for each qualification on entry group. The adjusted rates show a similar pattern to the actual rates.

**Table 32 Actual and adjusted unemployment rates**

<b>Qualifications on entry</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Adjusted</b>
1 to 10 A-level points	9%	10%
11 to 20 A-level points	8%	7%
21 to 30 A-level points	7%	8%
Access from 1998-99	13%	13%
Access prior to 1998-99	13%	13%
BTEC	13%	12%
Higher education	10%	8%
Other	12%	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>n/a</b>

114. For those graduates who are only in employment (in other words, not studying at the same time) six months after graduating, we are able to categorise their type of job into graduate or graduate-track level, or non-graduate; see Elias and Purcell (2004) for further details.

115. Table 33 shows the proportion of those graduates in employment only who are in a graduate-level job. It shows that those from access courses or who have an HE qualification on entry to their first degree have the highest proportions in graduate jobs. However this is unadjusted for length of HE course, age, the subject of degree study and gender.

**Table 33 Job type of those graduates in employment only**

Qualifications on entry	Graduate job	Non-graduate job	Unknown	Employment only	% graduate job (known)
1 to 10 A-level points	8,394	5,021	57	13,472	63%
11 to 20 A-level points	16,248	9,500	76	25,824	63%
21 to 30 A-level points	18,316	8,749	123	27,188	68%
Access from 1998-99	795	227	8	1,030	78%
Access prior to 1998-99	1,090	335	9	1,434	76%
BTEC	1,672	928	21	2,621	64%
Higher education	2,174	660	27	2,861	77%
Other	6,726	4,156	75	10,957	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,415</b>	<b>29,576</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>85,387</b>	<b>65%</b>

116. Table 34 shows the proportion of graduates who would be expected to have graduate jobs if each qualification on entry group had similar characteristics to the 'Access from 1998-99' group. It shows that the low proportions in graduate jobs for non-access or non-HE compared to the access and HE groups can be explained through other characteristics.

**Table 34 Actual and adjusted proportion of employment that is graduate-level**

Qualifications on entry	Actual	Adjusted
1 to 10 A-level points	63%	76%
11 to 20 A-level points	63%	75%
21 to 30 A-level points	68%	76%
Access from 1998-99	78%	78%
Access prior to 1998-99	76%	75%
BTEC	64%	78%
Higher education	77%	81%
Other	62%	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>n/a</b>

## Discussion and conclusions

### Access courses and widening participation

117. There are large differences in the participation rates of young people from different social or area backgrounds (for example, HEFCE(2005)). Most access students are aged 21 or over on entry and, in common with other mature entrants, we have no information on what their social or area background was when they were young. For this reason, we cannot say whether the large participation differences found between social and area groupings of young people are subsequently reduced by mature access entrants.

118. Only 1 per cent of students on access courses have an HE qualification, and only about 4 per cent had entered HE previously. Therefore most, for whatever reason did not go on from school or college to higher education, and access courses have provided that further

opportunity<sup>20</sup>. If we view mature entry as part of the widening participation agenda, the provision of access courses represents one of the most important interventions in widening participation.

### **Rates of progression to higher education**

119. Of those starting standard length access courses, 38 per cent had progressed to higher education within five years, and 54 per cent had entered higher education or continued with other further education study. Of those not progressing, some will not have completed the access course, but some will have then decided they do not want to progress further. Some will have changed circumstances which makes progressing to higher education difficult. It should not be assumed that those who do not progress view their experience on an access course as a 'waste of time'; there is plenty of evidence to the contrary, for example, Reay et al (2002). However, it is an important finding that the chances of progressing are not remote, and it is therefore of interest to see which groups of students have higher rates of progression.

120. We find, unsurprisingly, that young students, and students who are concurrently studying A-levels, have much higher progression rates than others. We see differences by other demographic characteristics and by subject of study, but these are not dramatic. Of some concern is the wide range of progression rates between institutions. At some colleges, less than one in five students progress to HE, and these rates do not seem to be a chance fluctuation, or due to the subjects offered, age or sex profile of the students.

### **Patterns of progression to higher education**

121. Typically, progressing to higher education means going from college to university. Of the access students who progress, nine out of ten move from one institution to another.

122. It seems that access course students are constrained, or at least prefer, to take up HE studies near their home: about half study within 30 minutes or less drive time. Despite this constraint, or preference, we do not find that students from a particular college all go to a particular university. The access course qualification is sufficiently recognised to give access course students a choice of institution; though, as might be expected, most go to post-1992 universities which have a tradition of mature entry and, in general, have less demanding entrance qualifications.

123. Most students (71 per cent) who progress go on to full-time degree programmes<sup>21</sup>. They study a wide range of subjects, with subjects allied to medicine (22 per cent), social studies (12 per cent), art and design (10 per cent), and maths and computer science (8 per cent) accounting for half the programmes. Some access courses focus on particular subjects,

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<sup>20</sup> Figures based on the 24,490 students starting on an access course in 2003-04 (see Table 3 for further details). A student's previous HE experience is defined from HESA records between 1995-96 and 2002-03, and LSC ILRs between 1998-99 and 2002-03.

<sup>21</sup> Of the 8,373 recorded in Table 12, 5,790 had progressed onto a full-time first-degree at some point before the end of 2003-04.

for example subjects allied to medicine, and many – in this case 84 per cent – students who progress to HE from such courses continue to study this subject. However, they only represent 31 per cent of those studying at HE level. Over half of the access students studying subjects allied to medicine at HE level do so from general access courses covering combined social sciences.

## **HE achievement and employment outcomes**

124. Once in higher education, access students on degree courses have completion rates which are similar to or better than those of other non A-level entrants. When the differences in age, sex and subject are taken into account, only students who enter HE with A-level scores of more than 10 have higher completion rates.

125. Six months after graduation, graduates from access courses have slightly higher unemployment rates than A-level graduates; however, three out of four are employed in a 'graduate' job, which is higher than for A-level graduates. This, no doubt, reflects the vocational focus demonstrated through some of the access course specialisms and the subjects that access course students study at university.

## **Access and 'vocational' routes to HE**

126. Much current policy development focuses on developing new and existing vocational routes to higher education, based on students' current employment. The access course route, at least as traditionally organised, follows a somewhat different model. The need for both approaches is apparent given that some of those who left school with few or no qualifications are not in employment where work-based learning is likely to lead to higher education. Even if their employment could lead to higher education, many will not want to make a radical change from the career that developed after leaving school.

127. Access courses are usually less directed than courses designed to prepare for particular occupations. Access courses may have a significant academic content, but that does not mean they are not vocational in the sense that they are preparing student for employment rather than solely for personal development or recreation. The best evidence that access courses are vocational in this wider sense is the very high proportion of those who, on graduating, go into graduate jobs.

128. The contrast between access courses and those courses designed to develop particular skills for specific occupations can be illustrated through the actual experience of an individual whose experience (while it may be particular in its detail) is typical in many respects.

### **A case study – from hairdresser to statistician**

Pauline was one of the last cohorts to leave school before the introduction of GCSEs. Like all the pupils in her school she was entered for CSE examinations and left without any 'O' levels. She then studied full-time at the local FE college for a City and Guilds certificate in

hairdressing and, after qualifying, became a hairdresser.

She then became a mother. After her son started school, she became a member of the board of governors. It was in that role that she had to consider reports on children with behavioural difficulties and became interested in the subject. Could she train as an educational psychologist? The first step was an enquiry at the local FE college which led to her enrolment on a one year full-time access course specialising in psychology.

She successfully completed this course, but two things led to a change of direction. Firstly, the access course included a certain amount of statistics. This was completely new to her and something that she found so interesting that she began to think that this is what she should study at university. Secondly, it became clear that her local post-1992 university, which had no special links or progression arrangements with the college, was unwilling to offer her a place to study psychology. This may reflect the popularity of this subject and the consequent competition for places. She was also rejected by the statistics department, but, when pressed, they offered her a place on condition she passed GCSE with at least a grade B. Back to the FE college one year later she passed this further hurdle and, after another three years, graduated with an upper second in statistics.

She has moved from the area and is now employed as a statistician within a multidisciplinary team which is involved in varied and challenging work. With support from her employer she is registered as a part-time MPhil student which she hopes may eventually lead to a PhD.

## **Expansion and development of access course provision**

129. Pauline's story shows that access courses can lead to a life-transforming process. Though not specifically vocational, unlike the hairdressing course, an access course can lead to a change to a more productive and satisfying occupation. Far from this experience being unique, the evidence suggests that it is shared by thousands of others. Can such provision be increased in the future?

130. For such expansion to take place there needs to be both the demand, or potential demand, and the resources to ensure an increasing supply. Clearly, the availability of public funds affects demand as well as supply, as it determines the level of student support and the size of the student contribution through fees.

131. Access courses are not well known enough to generate a large spontaneous demand, and, unlike A-level provision, there is no prior qualification to base an estimate on how many we might expect. The varying levels of provision by region, particularly the relatively high number of access course students in the London region, suggest that there may be latent unmet demand. The high take-up of access courses in the London region is particularly notable given the fact that this region has the highest level of young HE participation (HEFCE 2005) in England. It is also possible that there may be other factors, like the numbers of graduate jobs, which make access courses in London particularly attractive.

132. Given the lack of clear evidence for unmet or latent demand, it would be unwise to set a national target for growth. Nevertheless individual colleges should be in a position to be able to test their local markets and develop programmes sometimes in conjunction with Aimhigher partnerships<sup>22</sup>, sometimes through other initiatives. In its review of access courses, the QAA recommended that the funding arrangements should ensure security of funding and provide incentives for the development of new programmes (QAA 2004b). Since then the Learning and Skills Council, which funds access course provision, has ensured that its local offices understand the value of access courses and it has developed a higher education strategy which identifies access courses as critical to delivering the widening participation agenda.

133. Future access course take-up may also depend on the level of student support available for both maintenance and fees. The further education White Paper (DfES 2006) proposes full fee remission for access course students up to the age of 25, for those without a full level 3 qualification. For those over 25, it seems likely that full fee remission will continue to be available for those on income-related welfare benefits.

134. The case study above also highlights the fact that successful completion of an access course may not provide an opening to a higher education course. The development of Lifelong Learning Networks may help to smooth the path to progression in some cases, but the nature of access courses means that students' ambitions are likely to be diverse and, as we have seen, students from one access course will enter a wide range of institutions. Specific arrangements between institutions, or even groups of institutions, are unlikely to fully meet the needs of these students. What is needed is an acceptance of access course preparation by a wider range of institutions and departments. This was recognised in the QAA review (QAA 2004b), and since then progress has been made to ensure the standards required to achieve an access qualification are clear and consistently applied. Further, steps are being taken to develop a system of grading for access courses so that students will be able to demonstrate achievement beyond the current threshold level. This should help students when applying to institutions and departments where there is a high demand for places.

135. Taken together, these developments may not only expand access course provision, but may enable more access course students to progress to higher education, and for these students to graduate from a wider range of institutions.

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<sup>22</sup> Aimhigher partnerships help widen participation to higher education by raising aspirations and achievement among potential HE entrants. The Aimhigher website is at [www.aimhigher.ac.uk/home/index.cfm](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/home/index.cfm).



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## Annex A

### Cohort definitions

#### Original population

1. The original population, for year X, is made up of students who fit one of the following sets of criteria. Recorded on the LSC's individualised learner (student) record and:

a. Commenced between 1 August year X and 31 July year X+1 (ILR field: START DATE between dates specified).

b. Studying for an access qualification (ILR field: QUALIFICATION TYPE in ('0004','0005','0007')).

Or recorded on HESA's individualised student record and:

c. Commenced between 1 August year X and 31 July year X+1 (HESA field: COMDATE between dates specified).

d. Studying for an access qualification (HESA field: QUALAIM in ('71','72','73','74','75','76','77','78','79','80','99')).

e. Programme title (HESA field: PTITLE) contains the phrase 'Access' and does not contain either 'microsoft', 'mcsft', or 'ms'.

f. Student's mode is either full-time, part-time or sandwich (HESA field 70: MODE, codes '01', '02', '23', '24', '25', '31', '38' or '39').

2. Where there are multiple instances of the same student, only a single record is selected with LSC's ILR records favoured over HESA records.

#### Cohort for analysis

To be included in our final cohort for analysis, students had to fulfil the following additional criteria:

a. Not on a higher education course in year X or X-1.

b. Aged 19 or over at commencement of course.

c. Full-time and on course that lasts between 6 and 12 months, or part-time and on a course that last between 6 months and 2 years.

d. English-domiciled.

e. Funded through the LSC.

## **Annex B**

### **Outline of overall linking process**

1. The first step in the overall progress is to link all available HESA records. A unique longitudinal identifier is created for each individual that appears at any point in the HESA record. This is described in paragraphs 5-9.
2. Then all available LSC records are linked and a longitudinal identifier unique to the ILR is created. This is described in paragraphs 10-14.
3. The two sets of identifiers are then combined using the information obtained by linking LSC and HESA records (paragraphs 15-16). It is assumed that the HESA longitudinal identifier cannot be reduced any further, but the LSC longitudinal identifier can. This means that if, through the linking of HESA and LSC records, two HESA identifiers are found to be the same person, these identifiers remain as separate individuals. However if two LSC identifiers are found to be the same person, they are combined to create a single identifier.
4. The final outcome of this process is a single longitudinal identifier for all individuals on the LSC and HESA student records.

### **Outline of method used to link HESA student records**

5. All students in a HESA individualised student record (year X) are matched to the following record (year X+1) using a number of match processes:
  - records with matching HUSID, HESAINST and NUMHUS (HIN linked)
  - records matched on gender, birth date, first name and surname, with restriction for common names and an allowance for maiden name changes and spelling errors
  - records matched on HUSID and either postcode, birth date, surname or first name
  - records matched on HESAINST, HUSID, gender and surname with potential spelling errors or maiden name changes
  - records matched on birth date, gender and first part of postcode. A combination of first name, HUSID and second part of postcode is further used to eliminate/select potential matches.
6. These five matching processes are also used to internally match up students within a single academic year's HESA record. This internal matching is done for both year X and year X+1.

7. The identified matches are then resolved so that a single person identifier exists for year X and year X+1.

8. The process is repeated for matching between all pairs of years (X+1 and X+2, X and X+2, and so on).

9. The final step is to resolve all found links across all the years to produce a single HESA longitudinal identifier.

### **Outline of method used to link ILR student records**

10. All students in an LSC's individualised learner record (year X) are matched to the following record (year X+1) using a number of match processes. The three match processes given below in paragraph 15 of this annex are used, with an additional one:

- records matched on gender, surname, first names, institution attended and either same postcodes and mistyped birth dates, or same birth dates and mistyped postcodes.

11. Internal matching of a particular year's record is also completed using the same processes.

12. The identified matches are then resolved so that a single person identifier exists for year X and year X+1.

13. The process is repeated for matching between all pairs of years (X+1 and X+2, X and X+2, and so on).

14. The final step is to resolve all found links across all the years to produce a single LSC longitudinal identifier.

### **Outline of method used to link ILR student records to HESA student records**

15. All students in an LSC's individualised learner record (year X) are matched to a HESA individualised record using a number of match processes. The main approach to each matching process is given below (although in some other factors are taken into account):

- records matched on gender, birth date, surname, first name and postcode, with a restriction on common surnames
- records matched on gender, birth date, first name, postcode and an allowance for a misspelt non-common surname
- records matched on UCAS number and same birth dates (with an allowance for typing errors), or same surnames, or same postcodes.

## Annex C

### Paths of progression

1. We consider a student to have progressed to higher education if one of the following holds:
  - a. They are recorded in any of the HESA individualised student records between 1999-2000 and 2002-03, and:
    - i. They are active in the year in question (HESA field 70: MODE, codes '01', '02', '23', '24', '25', '31', '38' or '39'), and
    - ii. They are on a first degree course or higher (HESA field 41: QUALAIM, codes '02', '04', '06', '14', '03', '05', '07', '08', '09', '10', '12', '13', '18', '19', '20', '21', '22', '23' or '24'), or other undergraduate course (HESA field 41: QUALAIM, codes '15', '25', '26', '27', '28', '29', '30', '31', '32', '33', '41', '42', '43', '44', '45', '51', '52', '61', '62').
  - b. They are recorded in any of the LSC's individualised learner (student) records between 1999-2000 and 2002-03, and
    - i. The start data of the course is in the year in question (ILR field: START DATE between appropriate dates), and
    - ii. They are on a first degree course or higher (ILR field: QUALIFICATION TYPE codes '9107', '9000', '9002', '9101', '9103', '2001', '1406', '0393', '0394', 'E007', 'E008'), or other undergraduate course (ILR field: QUALIFICATION TYPE codes '9110', '0031', '0032').

## **Annex D**

### **Universities and colleges with a QAA-recognised access course in 1998-99**

Abingdon College of Further Education, Accrington and Rossendale College, Airedale and Wharfedale College, Alton College, Amersham and Wycombe College, Arnold and Carlton College, Aylesbury College, Barking College, Barnet College, Barnfield College, Barnsley College, Barrow Sixth Form College, Basford Hall College, Basildon College, Basingstoke College of Technology, Bedford College, Beverley College of Further Education, Bexhill College, Bilston Community College, Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies, Bishop Auckland College, Blackburn College, Blackburne House Centre for Women, Blackpool and the Fylde College, Bodmin Community College, Bolton College, Bolton Community Education Service, Bolton Institute of Higher Education, Boston College, Bournemouth and Poole College, Bourneville College, Bracknell and Wokingham College, Bradford and Ilkley Community College, Braintree Tertiary College, Brent Adult and Community Education Service, Bridgwater College, Brighton College of Technology, Brockenhurst College, Bromley College, Brooklands College, Broxtowe College, Brunel University College, Buckingham College of Higher Education, Burnley College, Burton upon Trent Technical College, Bury College, Bury Community Education Service, Calderdale College, Cambridge Regional College, Cannington College, Cannock Chase Technical College, Canterbury Christ Church College, Canterbury College, Carlisle College, Carmel College, Carshalton College, Cavendish College, Charles Keene College, Chelmsford College, Chessington Adult Education Services, Chesterfield College, Chichester College, Chippenham College, Cirencester College, City College, Manchester, City College, Norwich, City and Islington College, City of Bath College, City of Bristol College, City of Liverpool Community College, City of Sunderland College, City of Westminster College, Clarendon College Nottingham Corporation, Clean Break Theatre Company, Colchester Institute, College of North East London, College of North West London, Community Education, Lewisham, Cornwall College, Coventry Technical College, Craven College, Crawley College, Cricklade College, Croydon College, Dallam Community Education Centre, Darlington College of Technology, Dartford Adult Education Service, Daventry Tertiary College, De Montfort University, Derwentside College, Dewsbury College, Doncaster College, Dudley College of Technology, Dunstable College, Ealing Tertiary College, East Berkshire College, East Birmingham College, East Devon College, East Durham Community College, East London Advanced Technology Training, East Surrey College, East Yorkshire College, Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology, Eastleigh College, Ely Community College, Enfield College, Epping Forest College, Estover Community College, Exeter College, Exmouth Community College, Fareham College, Farnborough College of Technology, Farnham College, Filton College, Fircroft College, Furness College, Gateshead College, Gillingham Adult Education Centre, Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, Goldsmiths College, Grantham College, Great Yarmouth College, Greenhill College, Greenwich Community College, Grimsby College of Arts and Technology, Guildford College of Further and Higher Education, HM Prison Lancaster, Hackney Community College, Halesowen College, Halton College,

Hamilton Community College, Hammersmith and Fulham Community Education Service, Hammersmith and West London College, Handsworth College, Harlow College, Harrogate College, Hartlepool College of Further Education, Hartlepool Sixth Form College, Hastings College of Arts and Technology, Havant College, Havering College of Further and Higher Education, Haywards Heath College, Hendon College, Henley College, Hereward College, Hertford Regional College, Hexham Queen Elizabeth High School, High Peak College, Highbury College of Technology, Highfields Young and Community Centre, Highlands College, Hopwood Hall College, Huddersfield New College, Huddersfield Technical College, Hugh Baird College, Hull College of Further Education, Huntingdonshire Regional College, Hyde Clarendon College, Isle College of Further Education, Isle of Wight College, Isle of Wight Learning Centre, Ichen College, John Ellis Community Centre, Joseph Priestley College, Josiah Mason College, Keighley College, Kendal College, Kensington and Chelsea College, Kent Institute of Art and Design, Kenton School, King Edward VI College, Kingston College, Kingston Community Education, Kingsway College, Knowsley Community College, Lambeth College, Lambeth Community Education Service, Lancaster and Morecambe College, Leeds College of Art and Design, Leeds College of Music, Leeds College of Technology, Leek College of Further Education and Art, Leicester South Fields College, Lewes Tertiary College, Lewisham College, Linwood Centre, Lipson Community College, Liskeard Open Learning College, Liverpool Hope, Liverpool John Moores University, Loreto College, Loughborough College, Lowestoft College, Ludlow College, Macclesfield College, Mackworth College, Manchester Adult Education Service, Manchester College of Arts and Technology, Matthew Boulton College, Melton Mowbray College, Merton College, Mid Cheshire College, Mid Kent College of Higher and Further Education, Middlesbrough College, Milton Keynes College, Morley College, NESCOL, Nelson and Colne College, New College Durham, New College, Swindon, Newbury College, Newcastle College, Newcastle under Lyme College, Newham College of Further Education, Norfolk Adult Education department, Norfolk College, North Area College Stockport, North Birmingham College, North Derbyshire College, North Devon College, North East Worcestershire College, North Hertfordshire College, North Lincolnshire College, North Lindsey College, North Nottingham College, North Oxfordshire College, North Shropshire College, North Trafford College, North Tyneside College, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, North West Kent College of Technology, Northampton College, Northbrook College, Northern College, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Northumberland College, North Radstock College, Oaklands College, Okehampton College, Oldham College, Oldham Youth and Community Education Service, Orpington College, Oxford College of Further Education, Pakistani Muslim Centre, Park Lane College, Penwith College, People's College, Peter Symonds College, Peterborough Regional College, Plater College, Oxford, Plymouth College of Further Education, Preston College, Prince Edwin Adult College, Prior Purslow College, Prudhoe County High School, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington, Queen Mary's College, Reading College of Arts and Technology, Redbridge College, Regent College, Richard Huish College, Richmond Adult and Community Centre, Richmond upon Thames College, Ridge Danvers College, Riga International College of Economics and Business Administration, Rocking College of Arts and Technology, Rotherham Museum, Libraries and Arts department, Rotherham Young and Community Service, Rowley Regis College, Royal Forest of Dean College,

Royal National College for the Blind, Rugby College of Further Education, Runshaw College, Ruskin College, Oxford, Salford College, Salisbury College, Saltash College, Sandwell College of Further and Higher Education, Seaford Head Community College, Selby College, Sheffield Hallam University, Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology, Skelmersdale College, Solihull College, Somerset College of Arts and Technology, Soundwell College, South Birmingham College, South Cheshire College, South Devon College, South Downs College, South East Derbyshire College, South East Essex College of Arts and Technology, South East Essex Sixth Form and Community College, South Kent College, South Nottingham College, South Thames College, South Trafford College, South Tyneside College, Southampton City College, Southgate College, Southport College, Southwark College, Spelthorne College, St Austell College, St Clare's Adult Education Centre, St Helens College, St John Rigby Sixth Form College, St Vincent College, Stafford College, Stamford College, Standish Community High School, Stanmore College, Stephenson College, Stockport Adult Education Service, Stockton and Billingham College of Further Education, Stockton Sixth Form College, Stoke on Trent College, Stourbridge College, Stratford upon Avon College, Strode College, Stroud College, Surrey Adult and Continuing Education Service, Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Sutton Coldfield College, Swartmore Centre, Swindon College, Tameside College of Technology, University of Exeter, Tamworth and Lichfield College, Taunton's College, Tavistock Community College, Teesside Tertiary College, Telford College of Arts and Technology, Thames Valley University, Thanet College, Adult College Lancaster, Charles Wootton College for Further Education, City Literary Institute, Co-operative College, Distance Learning Centre, Henley College, The London Institute, The Performing Arts Consortium, Rutland College, Sheffield College, Thomas Danby College, Thomas Rotherham College, Thurrock College, Tile Hill College, Totton College, Tower Hamlets College, Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education, Trowbridge College, Truro College, Tynemouth College, Warrington Collegiate Institute, University of Derby, University of Hertfordshire, University of Huddersfield, University of Hull, University of Kent, University of Luton, University of North London, University of Plymouth, University of Portsmouth, University of Salford, University of Teesside, Uxbridge College, University of Sussex, Victoria Adult Education Centre, Wakefield District College, Walsall College of Arts and Technology, Waltham Forest College, Warwickshire College, Weald College, West Cheshire College, West Cumbria College, West Denton Community school, West Herts College, West Kent College, West Nottingham College, West Oxfordshire College, West Suffolk College, West Thames College, Westminster College, Weston College, Weymouth College, Wigan and Leigh College, Wigston College of Further Education, Wirral Metropolitan College, Wolverhampton Adult Education Service Woolwich College, Woolwich College, Works Education Association, Worthing Sixth Form College, Wreake Valley Community College, Wulfrun College of Further Education, Wycliffe Community College, Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College, Wyke College, Yeovil College, York College of Further Education, Yorkshire Coast College



## Annex E

### Extended tables

**Table E1 Progression of students by type of provider of the student's access course**

Length of course	Type of provider for access				Total	% Degree % UG	
		Degree level	OUG level	No HE			
Standard	FEC	5,527	1,519	11,008	<b>18,054</b>	31%	39%
	HEI	430	105	607	<b>1,142</b>	38%	47%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	31%	39%
Extended	FEC	496	264	1,687	<b>2,447</b>	20%	31%
	HEI	29	0*	44	<b>73</b>	40%	40%
<b>Total</b>		<b>525</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>1,731</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

Table E1 notes: \* shows cells where 5 or less students were recorded. These students have been categorised as 'no HE' for data protection reasons.

**Table E2 Progression of students by QAA recognition of provider**

Length of course	QAA recognition				Total	% Degree % UG	
		Degree level	OUG level	No HE			
Standard	Yes	5,957	1,624	11,615	<b>19,196</b>	31%	39%
	No	589	217	2,271	<b>3,077</b>	19%	26%
Extended	Yes	525	267	1,728	<b>2,520</b>	21%	31%
	No	25	25	227	<b>277</b>	9%	18%

**Table E3 Progression of students on an extended length course by region of institution**

Region of institution	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
South East	72	33	205	<b>310</b>	23%	34%
South West	63	11	105	<b>179</b>	35%	41%
London	44	32	145	<b>221</b>	20%	34%
East	63	34	282	<b>379</b>	17%	26%
East Midlands	58	22	172	<b>252</b>	23%	32%
West Midlands	104	70	418	<b>592</b>	18%	29%
Yorkshire & Humberside	75	39	242	<b>356</b>	21%	32%
North East	16	12	58	<b>86</b>	19%	33%
North West	30	14	101	<b>145</b>	21%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

**Table E4 Progression of access students on a standard length course by access course subject area**

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Creative arts & design	403	99	1,302	<b>1,804</b>	22%	28%
Subjects allied to medicine	268	336	940	<b>1,544</b>	17%	39%
Social studies	292	84	723	<b>1,099</b>	27%	34%
Business	206	42	511	<b>759</b>	27%	33%
Maths/Computing	159	35	368	<b>562</b>	28%	35%
Education	224	20	271	<b>515</b>	43%	47%
Other single subjects	86	18	181	<b>285</b>	30%	36%
Combined: Social science	3,724	834	6,212	<b>10,770</b>	35%	42%
Combined: Science	298	77	532	<b>907</b>	33%	41%
Combined: Other	297	79	575	<b>951</b>	31%	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

**Table E5 Progression of access students on an extended length course by subject area**

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Creative arts & design	47	13	191	<b>251</b>	19%	24%
Allied to medicine	25	46	150	<b>221</b>	11%	32%
Other single subject	51	15	138	<b>204</b>	25%	32%
Combined: Social science	365	177	1,097	<b>1,639</b>	22%	33%
Combined: Science/other	37	16	152	<b>205</b>	18%	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

**Table E6 Progression of students on a standard length course by other qualifications being studied concurrently**

<b>Concurrent qualifications</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Access course only	4,389	1,381	10,444	<b>16,214</b>	27%	36%
With A-level provision	1,170	118	566	<b>1,854</b>	63%	69%
With City and Guilds	16	6	26	<b>48</b>	33%	46%
With Certificate studies	127	42	228	<b>397</b>	32%	43%
With an NVQ/GNCQ	87	42	115	<b>244</b>	36%	53%
With another qualification	168	35	236	<b>439</b>	38%	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

**Table E7 Progression of students on an extended length access course by sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Degree level</b>	<b>OUG level</b>	<b>No HE</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Degree</b>	<b>% UG</b>
Male	94	46	421	<b>561</b>	17%	25%
Female	431	221	1,307	<b>1,959</b>	22%	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

**Table E8 Progression of students on an extended length access course by age**

Age	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
Young (20 and below)	34	25	146	<b>205</b>	17%	29%
Mature (21 and over)	491	242	1,582	<b>2,315</b>	21%	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

**Table E9 Progression of students on a standard length access course by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi or Indian	126	31	261	<b>418</b>	30%	38%
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	101	16	242	<b>359</b>	28%	33%
Chinese or other Asian background	87	24	198	<b>309</b>	28%	36%
Black/Black British African	386	167	850	<b>1,403</b>	28%	39%
Black/Black British - Caribbean	273	87	596	<b>956</b>	29%	38%
Other Black background	128	22	255	<b>405</b>	32%	37%
White	4,272	1,112	7,749	<b>13,133</b>	33%	41%
Other or unknown	584	165	1,464	<b>2,213</b>	26%	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,957</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>11,615</b>	<b>19,196</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Table E9 notes: Some ethnic groups have been combined to ensure data protection for individuals.

**Table E10 Progression of students on an extended length access course by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Degree level	OUG level	No HE	Total	% Degree	% UG
Non White background	51	40	186	<b>277</b>	18%	33%
White	424	201	1366	<b>1991</b>	21%	31%
Other or unknown	50	26	176	<b>252</b>	20%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>2,520</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

Table E10 notes: Some ethnic groups have been combined to ensure data protection for individuals.

## Annex F

### Employment categories

1. The employment categories are derived from Fields 05 ('Main activity') and 06 ('Other activity') from the HESA First Destination Survey (2001-02), and Fields 05 ('Employment circumstances') and 06 ('Mode of study') from the HESA Destination of Leavers from Higher Education collection (2002-03 and 2003-04).

2. The groupings are as follows:

a. Employed or studying:

Full-time paid work only

Part-time work only

Work and further study

Further study only

b. Unemployed:

Assumed to be unemployed

c. No response or undefined:

Not available for employment

Non responder

No record required

## List of abbreviations

<b>FE</b>	Further education
<b>FEC</b>	Further education college
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HEI</b>	Higher education institution
<b>HESA</b>	Higher Education Statistics Agency
<b>ILR</b>	Individualised learner record
<b>ISR</b>	Individualised student record
<b>LSC</b>	Learning and Skills Council
<b>LSDA</b>	Learning and Skills Development Agency
<b>OUG</b>	Other undergraduate
<b>QAA</b>	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
<b>TDA</b>	Training and Development Agency for Schools
<b>UCAS</b>	Universities & Colleges Admissions Service
<b>UG</b>	Undergraduate