Introduction

This publication is one of four reference volumes from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), which present statistics about the publicly-funded higher education institutions of the United Kingdom.

This volume draws on HESA's collection of data about students in higher education institutions in the academic year ending 31 July 1997, and it covers data supplied by 177 institutions.

The other reference volumes published by HESA are:

Resources of Higher Education Institutions - which draws on HESA's collection of data about finance and staff of higher education institutions. Tabulations are included which record and analyse the income and expenditure of universities and colleges (with data shown at institutional level) and also about the characteristics of academic staff.

First Destinations of Students Leaving Higher Education Institutions - which includes statistics about the first destinations of graduates, including employment rates, participation in further education and training, etc. A summary tabulation at institution level is included.

Higher Education Statistics for the United Kingdom - which is published in conjunction with the Government Statistical Service and which presents an overview of higher education from a statistical perspective, including statistics about applications, participation, institutional finance and staffing and student awards and loans.

The Agency also makes available a number of other related products, including an electronic source "HE Planning Plus", available on CD ROM, which contains a significant amount of data about student characteristics and courses of study. A series of Research Datapacks provides in depth coverage of items of special interest. More information about HESA's other publications is set out at the end of this volume.

While HESA publishes, and commissions others to publish, extensively from the data it collects, it is recognised that specific requirements by some interested parties may not be addressed. Therefore, the Agency undertakes to provide a service to answer enquiries about the data collected, for which a charge will normally be levied.

Students in UK Higher Education Institutions, 1996/97

In 1997 HESA collected student data from all publicly-funded UK higher education institutions for the academic year 1996/97 (i.e. the period 1 August 1996 to 31 July 1997). This information was collected uniformly from all of the universities and higher education colleges in the UK.

This commentary summarises and analyses the data contained within the main tables and presents summary statistics and key points.

Summary of Key Points

- 1,756,179 students were recorded as following higher education (HE) programmes on 1 December 1996.
- A further 40,902 students were following courses at further education (FE) level.
- Of the 1,756,179 HE students recorded, 64.8% were following full-time or sandwich programmes and 79.3% were studying at undergraduate level.
- Full-time first degree students made up slightly less than half of the recorded HE student population.
- Women made up 52.5% of the student population and 54.2% of UK domiciled undergraduates.
- Students from countries other than the UK numbered 198,064 and represented 11.3% of the total student body.

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- Overseas students made up 35% of all full-time postgraduates.
- Women were a significant majority in subjects allied to medicine, and were also very strongly represented among students of biological sciences, veterinary science, social, economic & political studies, librarianship & information science, languages and education.
- Men were a significant majority in engineering & technology, in computing and in architecture, building & planning and strongly represented in physical and mathematical sciences.
- Students from outside the UK were well-represented in agriculture & related subjects, veterinary science, engineering & technology, law and business & administrative studies.
- Ethnic minorities constituted 12.8% of all first year UK domiciled students.
- Slightly more than 52% of students who obtained a classified first degree were awarded first or upper second class honours, with 7.7% being awarded a first.

Student Population

On 1 December 1996 there were almost 1.8 million students who were studying for qualifications or credit in the 177 higher education institutions of the United Kingdom.

Of these, 40,902 (2.3%) were studying at FE level: these students are included for completeness in Table A below and in the first two of the main tables in this volume, but are not routinely included within the more specific analyses.

Table A - All Students by Level and Mode of Study 1996/97

	Full-time	*% of FT HE Students*	Part-time	*% of PT HE Students*	**Total**	*% of HE Students*
PG research degrees	49131	*4.3%*	50871	*8.2%*	100002	*5.7%*
PG taught degrees	54660	*4.8%*	104836	*17.0%*	159496	*9.1%*
Other taught postgraduate	37118	*3.3%*	66956	*10.8%*	104074	*5.9%*
Total postgraduate	140909	*12.4%*	222663	*36.1%*	363572	*20.7%*
First degree	878033	*77.1%*	184710	*29.9%*	1062743	*60.5%*
Other undergraduate	119628	*10.5%*	210236	*34.0%*	329864	*18.8%*
Total undergraduate	**997661**	***87.6%***	**394946**	***63.9%***	**1392607**	***79.3%***
Total HE students	**1138570**	***100.0%***	**617609**	***100.0%***	**1756179**	***100.0%***
Total FE students	**12438**		**28464**		**40902**	
Total	**1151008**		**646073**		**1797081**	

Derived from Tables 1a, 1c, 1e and 1g.

Of the 1,756,179 HE students recorded, 64.8% were following full-time or sandwich programmes (1995/96: 64.4%) and 79.3% were studying at undergraduate level (1995/96: 78.5%).

Of the 363,572 postgraduate students, just over 100,000 (27.5%) were enrolled on research degrees, (1995/96: 25.4%) and the remaining 72.5% on taught higher degrees and other postgraduate qualifications.

Of the 1,392,607 undergraduates, 76.3% students were studying for a first degree, (1995/96: 77.7%) with the remaining 23.7% following other undergraduate courses (e.g. DipHE, HND, and other undergraduate diplomas and certificates).

Full-time first degree students made up slightly less than half of the recorded HE student population.

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Derived from Tables 1a, 1c, 1e and 1g.

Domicile and Gender

Table B provides a summary of students by domicile and gender.

Table B - All Students by Gender, Mode and Domicile 1996/97

	Full-time			Part-time			All Students			
	Total	Female	Male	**Total**	Female	Male	**Total**	*% by Domicile*	Female	Male
United Kingdom	**978518**	507986	470532	**579597**	323886	255711	**1558115**	*88.7%*	831872	726243
Other European Union	**74842**	36518	38324	**13282**	6260	7022	**88124**	*5.0%*	42778	45346
Other overseas	**85210**	36897	48313	**24730**	9958	14772	**109940**	*6.3%*	46855	63085
Non-UK sub-total	**160052**	73415	86637	**38012**	16218	21794	**198064**	*11.3%*	89633	108431
Total	**1138570**	**581401**	**557169**	**617609**	**340104**	**277505**	**1756179**	***100.0%***	**921505**	**834674**

Derived from Tables 1a, 1c, 1e and 1g.

Students from countries other than the UK numbered 198,064 and represented 11.3% of the total student body.

Overall, women made up 52.5% of the student population. They were in a majority among both full-time and part-time students, although they were slightly more predominant among part-time students. The proportion of female students did however vary according to domicile, with 45% of overseas students being female, compared with 53% of UK domiciled students.

Some 39% of all overseas students were following postgraduate level programmes. Table C provides a more detailed breakdown.

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Table C - Postgraduates by Gender, Mode and Domicile 1996/97

	Full-time			Part-time			All students			
	Total	Female	Male	**Total**	Female	Male	**Total**	*% by Domicile*	Female	Male
Research for a higher degree										
United Kingdom	**30689**	11985	18704	**39128**	15894	23234	**69817**	*69.8%*	27879	41938
Other European Union	**5183**	2106	3077	**3338**	1359	1979	**8521**	*8.5%*	3465	5056
Other overseas	**13259**	4205	9054	**8405**	2599	5806	**21664**	*21.7%*	6804	14860
Taught course for a higher degree										
United Kingdom	**29000**	13019	15981	**92073**	45021	47052	**121073**	*75.9%*	58040	63033
Other European Union	**9326**	4081	5245	**4320**	1708	2612	**13646**	*8.6%*	5789	7857
Other overseas	**16334**	6946	9388	**8443**	3195	5248	**24777**	*15.5%*	10141	14636
Other postgraduate										
United Kingdom	**32045**	19046	12999	**62908**	37109	25799	**94953**	*91.2%*	56155	38798
Other European Union	**2173**	1158	1015	**1058**	562	496	**3231**	*3.1%*	1720	1511
Other overseas	**2900**	1342	1558	**2990**	1255	1735	**5890**	*5.7%*	2597	3293
All postgraduates										
United Kingdom	**91734**	44050	47684	**194109**	98024	96085	**285843**	*78.6%*	142074	143769
Other European Union	**16682**	7345	9337	**8716**	3629	5087	**25398**	*7.0%*	10974	14424
Other overseas	**32493**	12493	20000	**19838**	7049	12789	**52331**	*14.4%*	19542	32789
Non-UK sub-total	**49175**	**19838**	**29337**	**28554**	**10678**	**17876**	**77729**	***21.4%***	**30516**	**47213**
Total	**140909**	**63888**	**77021**	**222663**	**108702**	**113961**	**363572**	***100.0%***	**172590**	**190982**

Derived from Tables 1c and 1g.

It will be seen that overseas students made up over a fifth of the postgraduate student population in the UK, and almost 35% of all full-time postgraduates. Approximately two-thirds of all postgraduate overseas students came from outside the European Union. Non-UK students were particularly prominent on higher degree programmes, making up 37.5% of full-time research higher degree students and 47% of students on full-time taught higher degree courses.

Overall, 47% of all postgraduates and 49% of those domiciled in the UK were female, but there were considerable differences between the different types of programme and different areas of domicile. Female students were in a significant majority in non-degree level postgraduate programmes (which are dominated by Postgraduate Certificates in Education), but made up fewer than half of the students on taught higher degree courses, and only 38% of research students. Whereas 40% of research students from the UK and the EU were women, only 31% of research students from other overseas countries were female.

Chart 2 illustrates these differences.

Derived from Tables 1c and 1g.

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A different pattern may be observed at undergraduate level, as is shown in Table D.

Table D - Undergraduates by Gender, Mode and Domicile 1996/97

	Full-time			Part-time			All Students			
	Total	Female	Male	**Total**	Female	Male	**Total**	*% by Domicile*	Female	Male
First degree										
United Kingdom	**791805**	408945	382860	**181298**	97690	83608	**973103**	*91.6%*	506635	466468
Other European Union	**42160**	19710	22450	**1547**	744	803	**43707**	*4.1%*	20454	23253
Other overseas	**44068**	19440	24628	**1865**	1043	822	**45933**	*4.3%*	20483	25450
Other undergraduate										
United Kingdom	**94979**	54991	39988	**204190**	128172	76018	**299169**	*90.7%*	183163	116006
Other European Union	**16000**	9463	6537	**3019**	1887	1132	**19019**	*5.8%*	11350	7669
Other overseas	**8649**	4964	3685	**3027**	1866	1161	**11676**	*3.5%*	6830	4846
All undergraduates										
United Kingdom	**886784**	463936	422848	**385488**	225862	159626	**1272272**	*91.4%*	689798	582474
Other European Union	**58160**	29173	28987	**4566**	2631	1935	**62726**	*4.5%*	31804	30922
Other overseas	**52717**	24404	28313	**4892**	2909	1983	**57609**	*4.1%*	27313	30296
Total	**997661**	**517513**	**480148**	**394946**	**231402**	**163544**	**1392607**	***100.0%***	**748915**	**643692**

Derived from Tables 1a and 1e.

Overseas students made up 8.6% of the total undergraduate population, with students from the European Union being rather more likely to undertake non-degree level study than students from other overseas countries.

Overall, the gender balance shows women in a majority: more than 54% of UK domiciled undergraduates were women, compared with 51% of other EU students and 47% of students from other countries. Women were particularly prominent among students of non-degree courses, on which they represented almost 60% of the total: subject considerations are influential here - as shown in the following section.

Subject of Study

Table E shows the percentage of students at different levels who were following programmes of study in each subject area.

Table E - All students by Subject Area, Level of Course and Mode of Study 1996/97

Percentages

	First Degree			Other UG			Higher Degree (Research)			Higher Degree (Taught)			Other PG		
	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**
Medicine & dentistry	*3.1*	*0.0*	***2.6***	*0.2*	*0.0*	***0.1***	*5.7*	*9.0*	***7.4***	*2.5*	*2.3*	***2.4***	*1.0*	*1.6*	***1.4***
Subjects allied to medicine	*5.0*	*11.4*	***6.1***	*32.3*	*15.3*	***21.5***	*4.1*	*5.0*	***4.5***	*2.6*	*7.3*	***5.7***	*1.7*	*4.9*	***3.8***
Biological sciences	*6.5*	*1.6*	***5.7***	*2.1*	*0.8*	***1.2***	*13.3*	*10.3*	***11.8***	*4.1*	*2.6*	***3.1***	*0.6*	*0.7*	***0.6***
Veterinary science	*0.3*	*0.0*	***0.2***	*0.0*	*0.0*	***0.0***	*0.6*	*0.5*	***0.5***	*0.2*	*0.0*	***0.1***	*0.1*	*0.2*	***0.2***
Agriculture & related subjects	*0.9*	*0.1*	***0.7***	*3.1*	*0.3*	***1.3***	*1.9*	*1.3*	***1.6***	*1.4*	*0.4*	***0.7***	*0.3*	*0.3*	***0.3***
Physical sciences	*5.6*	*1.3*	***4.9***	*1.3*	*1.1*	***1.1***	*17.2*	*9.3*	***13.2***	*4.5*	*2.3*	***3.0***	*0.7*	*0.8*	***0.8***
Mathematical sciences	*1.7*	*0.1*	***1.4***	*0.5*	*0.1*	***0.2***	*3.1*	*1.7*	***2.4***	*1.1*	*0.7*	***0.8***	*0.3*	*0.2*	***0.3***
Computer science	*4.6*	*2.2*	***4.2***	*7.4*	*3.4*	***4.8***	*3.4*	*2.9*	***3.2***	*7.4*	*4.0*	***5.2***	*2.6*	*0.9*	***1.5***
Engineering & technology	*9.3*	*4.2*	***8.4***	*7.5*	*3.4*	***4.9***	*16.4*	*12.7*	***14.5***	*10.7*	*5.4*	***7.2***	*2.1*	*2.2*	***2.2***
Architecture, building & planning	*2.7*	*2.9*	***2.8***	*2.5*	*1.4*	***1.8***	*1.4*	*2.0*	***1.7***	*2.8*	*3.0*	***2.9***	*7.4*	*3.3*	***4.7***
Social, economic & political studies	*8.1*	*3.1*	***7.2***	*5.6*	*5.8*	***5.7***	*9.0*	*10.5*	***9.8***	*14.3*	*9.6*	***11.3***	*5.1*	*6.0*	***5.7***
Law	*3.7*	*3.3*	***3.6***	*1.3*	*0.7*	***0.9***	*1.8*	*1.7*	***1.8***	*5.0*	*2.3*	***3.2***	*9.2*	*4.1*	***6.0***
Business & administrative studies	*11.1*	*6.4*	***10.3***	*18.1*	*13.2*	***15.0***	*3.4*	*5.4*	***4.4***	*21.1*	*24.6*	***23.4***	*5.1*	*29.6*	***20.8***
Librarianship & information science	*1.4*	*0.4*	***1.2***	*0.4*	*0.6*	***0.5***	*0.5*	*0.6*	***0.6***	*2.9*	*1.7*	***2.1***	*2.1*	*0.7*	***1.2***
Languages	*6.8*	*1.8*	***5.9***	*1.8*	*6.3*	***4.7***	*6.2*	*6.6*	***6.4***	*5.0*	*2.7*	***3.5***	*1.5*	*0.7*	***1.0***
Humanities	*3.8*	*1.3*	***3.3***	*0.5*	*5.4*	***3.6***	*6.1*	*8.0*	***7.1***	*3.7*	*3.4*	***3.5***	*0.9*	*0.7*	***0.8***
Creative arts & design	*7.4*	*1.4*	***6.4***	*5.3*	*1.9*	***3.2***	*2.0*	*2.9*	***2.5***	*4.8*	*2.3*	***3.2***	*2.9*	*0.6*	***1.4***
Education	*5.7*	*2.6*	***5.2***	*0.7*	*6.4*	***4.4***	*2.2*	*7.6*	***5.0***	*3.5*	*15.3*	***11.3***	*55.6*	*35.3*	***42.6***
Combined	*12.1*	*55.8*	***19.7***	*9.6*	*34.1*	***25.2***	*1.6*	*1.9*	***1.8***	*2.4*	*10.0*	***7.4***	*0.8*	*7.2*	***4.9***

Derived from Table 2.

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The significant proportion of students who were following other undergraduate programmes and also part-time first degree programmes in subjects allied to medicine (which include nursing) is notable. Other subject areas which were popular at other undergraduate level (i.e. mostly diplomas and certificates) are computer science and engineering & technology. However at this level, and also among first degree students, the most popular specific subject area was business & administrative studies: the large proportion following part-time degree programmes in combined studies is significantly influenced by the Open University, whose undergraduate students are enrolled on a combined programme of study. The sciences and engineering & technology had significant numbers of research students, but taught postgraduate courses were dominated by students of business & administrative studies and education. The different patterns of subject participation according to gender and domicile are shown in Table F.

Table F - Distribution by Subject Area, Gender and non-UK Domiciled 1996/97

Percentages

	% Female	% non-UK	% non-EU
Medicine & dentistry	*50.7*	*12.4*	*9.7*
Subjects allied to medicine	*82.7*	*6.7*	*3.3*
Biological sciences	*58.8*	*9.7*	*4.4*
Veterinary science	*59.8*	*15.5*	*12.2*
Agriculture & related subjects	*44.7*	*16.5*	*9.1*
Physical sciences	*35.3*	*10.4*	*4.7*
Mathematical sciences	*36.5*	*12.6*	*6.7*
Computer science	*21.2*	*9.7*	*5.5*
Engineering & technology	*13.9*	*23.0*	*13.6*
Architecture, building & planning	*24.9*	*13.3*	*7.7*
Social, economic & political studies	*59.0*	*13.3*	*7.7*
Law	*53.8*	*16.8*	*11.1*
Business & administrative studies	*47.8*	*15.9*	*9.3*
Librarianship & information science	*61.1*	*11.2*	*5.8*
Languages	*68.2*	*13.5*	*5.3*
Humanities	*53.8*	*8.1*	*4.9*
Creative arts & design	*57.6*	*8.9*	*4.9*
Education	*71.1*	*6.2*	*4.5*
Combined	*55.0*	*6.4*	*2.9*
Total - All subject areas	***52.5***	***11.3***	***6.3***

Derived from Table 2e.

The table shows that women were a significant majority in subjects allied to medicine, and were also very strongly represented among students of biological sciences, veterinary science, social, economic & political studies, librarianship & information science, languages and education. Men were a significant majority in engineering & technology, in computing and in architecture, building & planning, and strongly represented in physical and mathematical sciences. Students from outside the UK were well-represented in agriculture & related subjects, veterinary science, engineering & technology, law and business & administrative studies.

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Length of Study Programme

Table G shows the expected length of the study programme reported for full-time students who commenced studying on programmes leading to first degrees in the academic year 1996/97.

Table G - First Year Full-time First Degree Students by Subject Area and Expected Length of Programme 1996/97

	Expected Length of Programme							
	<=3 years		>3& <=4 years		>4& <=5 years		>5 years	
Medicine & dentistry	1977	*29.5%*	141	*2.1%*	4198	*62.7%*	377	*5.6%*
Subjects allied to medicine	11197	*70.5%*	4538	*28.6%*	136	*0.9%*	11	*0.1%*
Biological sciences	15835	*77.5%*	4388	*21.5%*	203	*1.0%*	1	*0.0%*
Veterinary science	60	*10.3%*	0	*0.0%*	466	*79.8%*	58	*9.9%*
Agriculture & related subjects	1464	*55.6%*	1161	*44.1%*	10	*0.4%*	0	*0.0%*
Physical sciences	10317	*62.0%*	6083	*36.6%*	231	*1.4%*	3	*0.0%*
Mathematical sciences	3093	*57.6%*	2262	*42.1%*	19	*0.4%*	0	*0.0%*
Computer science	7196	*45.4%*	8410	*53.1%*	243	*1.5%*	2	*0.0%*
Engineering & technology	13426	*45.7%*	13357	*45.5%*	2547	*8.7%*	30	*0.1%*
Architecture, building & planning	4392	*54.8%*	3015	*37.6%*	365	*4.6%*	243	*3.0%*
Social, economic & political studies	21253	*87.0%*	3131	*12.8%*	35	*0.1%*	12	*0.0%*
Law	10155	*87.3%*	1459	*12.5%*	17	*0.1%*	3	*0.0%*
Business & administrative studies	18754	*51.4%*	17514	*48.0%*	235	*0.6%*	3	*0.0%*
Librarianship & information science	3868	*84.5%*	706	*15.4%*	0	*0.0%*	4	*0.1%*
Languages	9844	*54.5%*	8101	*44.8%*	90	*0.5%*	28	*0.2%*
Humanities	9685	*91.0%*	939	*8.8%*	9	*0.1%*	10	*0.1%*
Creative arts & design	20917	*87.3%*	3031	*12.6%*	15	*0.1%*	2	*0.0%*
Education	6161	*43.2%*	7959	*55.8%*	136	*1.0%*	1	*0.0%*
Combined	32015	*77.7%*	8756	*21.3%*	388	*0.9%*	30	*0.1%*
Total - All subject areas	**201609**	***65.7%***	**94951**	***31.0%***	**9343**	***3.0%***	**818**	***0.3%***

Derived from Table 3a.

Note: Percentages are calculated against the total number of students of known length of study programme.

Overall, 65.7% of new students were following programmes of up to three years' duration; 31% were on programmes expected to last four years; and 3.3% were following programmes expected to last over four years. There were, predictably, significant differences by subject area. A majority of students following programmes in education and computer science were expected to study for four years, together with more than 40% of students of engineering & technology, business & administrative studies and agriculture. Programmes of five or more years were the norm for students of clinical subjects, and also for some students of architecture, building & planning and engineering & technology. It is relevant to consider these figures alongside information about work placements, and therefore the following section looks at sandwich study.

Sandwich Students

In most of the tables of this volume, sandwich students are included within the full-time category. It is however of interest to note that students on sandwich programmes constitute almost 9% of all undergraduates, and they are considerably more prominent within some disciplines.

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The following table provides a breakdown by qualification aim and subject group:

Table H - Undergraduate Sandwich Students 1996/97

	First Degree	Other UG	Sandwich Students as a Percentage of all Undergraduates
Medicine & dentistry	0	0	*0.0%*
Subjects allied to medicine	4784	900	*4.2%*
Biological sciences	5572	25	*8.7%*
Veterinary science	0	0	*0.0%*
Agriculture & related subjects	2554	2127	*38.7%*
Physical sciences	4827	179	*9.0%*
Mathematical sciences	2042	41	*13.1%*
Computer science	17328	1091	*30.4%*
Engineering & technology	19128	1256	*19.3%*
Architecture, building & planning	8377	641	*25.5%*
Social, economic & political studies	2080	206	*2.4%*
Law	887	2	*2.1%*
Business & administrative studies	34963	2480	*23.6%*
Librarianship & information science	490	3	*3.3%*
Languages	2236	8	*2.9%*
Humanities	5	0	*0.0%*
Creative arts & design	3141	22	*4.0%*
Education	446	91	*0.8%*
Combined	5390	184	*1.9%*
Total - All subject areas	**114250**	**9256**	***8.9%***

Derived from Table 7.

As the table indicates, sandwich study is particularly common in the areas of agriculture & related subjects, computer science, architecture, building & planning and business & administrative studies.

Age of Students

The growth in the participation of mature students in higher education is well-documented. Table Ii shows the percentage of students within age groups among first year undergraduates.

Table Ii - Age Distribution of First Year UK Domiciled Undergraduates (1) by Mode of Study 1996/97

Percentages

	First Degree			Other Undergraduate		
	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**
18 and under	*45.8*	*0.6*	***38.4***	*23.2*	*1.5*	***7.9***
19	*19.8*	*0.9*	***16.7***	*18.8*	*1.4*	***6.5***
20	*7.5*	*1.7*	***6.6***	*10.3*	*1.5*	***4.1***
21-24	*12.0*	*12.4*	***12.1***	*18.8*	*11.0*	***13.3***
25-29	*6.0*	*20.8*	***8.4***	*10.4*	*16.8*	***14.9***
30 and over	*8.8*	*63.6*	***17.9***	*18.5*	*67.7*	***53.1***
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***

(1) Those whose age is known

Derived from Tables 1b and 1f.

26.8% of new students on full-time degree courses were aged 21 and over (1995/96: 28.4%); 47.7% of new students on full-time other undergraduate courses were also 21 or over (1995/96: 44.7%). 63.6% of part-time first degree entrants were 30 or over (1995/96: 56.1%).

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Table Iii presents equivalent information for postgraduates.

Table Iii - Age Distribution of First Year UK Domiciled Postgraduates (1) by Mode of Study 1996/97

Percentages

	Full-time	Part-time	**Total**
Under 21	*0.8*	*0.3*	***0.6***
21-24	*54.8*	*10.7*	***31.7***
25-29	*21.4*	*20.8*	***21.1***
30 and over	*23.0*	*68.2*	***46.7***
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***

(1) Those whose age is known. Derived from Tables 1d and 1h.

Ethnicity

HESA receives from institutions information about the ethnicity of students where this is known. The collection process began in 1994/95 and is therefore now in its third year. Ethnicity is known for 88% of new undergraduates and 75% of new postgraduates. In respect of all students (including continuing students), the information is available for 85% of undergraduates and 67% of postgraduates. Although this year, for the first time, HESA presents in Table 10 ethnicity information for the student population as a whole, the Agency advises caution in analysis at postgraduate level.

In any case, the latest trend in relation to ethnic minority participation is best judged by considering first year students only: Table J shows the participation rate of ethnic minority students among new undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Table J - Ethnic Minority Students as a Percentage of UK Domiciled First Year Students of known Ethnicity 1996/97

	Percentages
Research for a higher degree	***9.2***
Full-time	*9.2*
Part-time	*9.1*
Taught course for a higher degree	***14.5***
Full-time	*18.0*
Part-time	*12.0*
Other postgraduate	***9.2***
Full-time	*8.7*
Part-time	*9.7*
First degree	***13.7***
Full-time	*14.4*
Part-time	*9.8*
Other undergraduate	***11.7***
Full-time	*19.2*
Part-time	*8.3*

Derived from Table 10a

Overall, ethnic minorities constituted 12.8% of all first year UK domiciled students, and were more strongly represented among full-time undergraduates and taught postgraduates. They were less strongly represented among research students, and among part-time students generally.

Within the ethnic minority student population there are significant differences in gender participation. The following chart shows, for ethnic minorities among all undergraduates, the gender balance by ethnic group.

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Derived from Table 10b.

Qualifications Obtained

In the 1996/97 academic year, a total of 427,070 qualifications were awarded at HE level (compared with 416,297 in the previous year). Of these awards, slightly more than 250,000 (60%) were first degrees, and 62,000 (14.6%) were other undergraduate qualifications. Approximately 10,000 doctorates were awarded, together with 49,000 other higher degrees. Postgraduate Certificates in Education (PGCE) were awarded to just over 20,000 people, and just over 30,000 other postgraduate qualifications were awarded.

Table K gives more detail.

Table K - Qualifications Obtained by Type of Qualification, Mode and Domicile 1996/97

	All Qualifications	First Degrees	HND/DipHE	Other UG Quals	Doctorates	Other Higher Degrees	PGCE	Other PG Quals
Full-time								
All students	**315763**	**230415**	**25752**	**8449**	**1993**	**21911**	**17932**	**9311**
UK domiciled	**273970**	206081	24152	6778	1177	11086	17471	7225
Overseas domiciled	**41793**	24334	1600	1671	816	10825	461	2086
Part-time								
All students	**111307**	**24845**	**3260**	**24767**	**8221**	**26877**	**2165**	**21172**
UK domiciled	**99770**	23968	3136	24163	5564	20599	2148	20192
Overseas domiciled	**11537**	877	124	604	2657	6278	17	980
Total All Students	**427070**	**255260**	**29012**	**33216**	**10214**	**48788**	**20097**	**30483**
Percentage of all qualifications	***100.0%***	*59.8%*	*6.8%*	*7.8%*	*2.4%*	*11.4%*	*4.7%*	*7.1%*
UK domiciled	**373740**	230049	27288	30941	6741	31685	19619	27417
Overseas domiciled	**53330**	25211	1724	2275	3473	17103	478	3066

Derived from Table 14a.

Table L presents a summary of the classification of first degrees awarded and shows the percentage awarded in each classification, by mode of study, domicile and gender.

Important note: in 1996/97 for the first time, it has been possible for HESA, by using a new coding structure, to differentiate between unclassified first degrees (e.g. those in clinical subjects, which are predominantly awarded without classification) and those degrees awarded as "pass/unclassified" after completion of an honours programme. The following figures, which aggregate third class and pass degrees, are therefore not comparable with figures shown in previous volumes, but aim to provide a better representation of the proportion of students obtaining particular classifications. However, there is a small number of institutions which have not been able to adapt to the new coding structure in this first year, and therefore in the following tables there are some students, mostly of clinical subjects, who are incorrectly assigned to the category "Third class/Pass".

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Table L - First Degree Classifications by Mode, Domicile and Gender 1996/97

	Total First Degrees	First Class	Upper Second	Lower Second	Third Class/Pass	Unclassified
Total Full-time	**230415**	**16708**	**98343**	**84847**	**19627**	**10890**
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*7.6%*	*44.8%*	*38.7%*	*8.9%*	-
UK domiciled	**206081**	**14648**	**90042**	**75276**	**16369**	**9746**
Female	**108823**	7087	51749	39010	6315	4662
Male	**97258**	7561	38293	36266	10054	5084
Overseas domiciled	**24334**	**2060**	**8301**	**9571**	**3258**	**1144**
Female	**10565**	728	4066	4214	1073	484
Male	**13769**	1332	4235	5357	2185	660
Total Part-time	**24845**	**1371**	**6606**	**5955**	**2563**	**8350**
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*8.3%*	*40.0%*	*36.1%*	*15.5%*	-
UK domiciled	**23968**	**1358**	**6421**	**5630**	**2249**	**8310**
Female	**12798**	668	3643	2975	1080	4432
Male	**11170**	690	2778	2655	1169	3878
Overseas domiciled	**877**	**13**	**185**	**325**	**314**	**40**
Female	**475**	11	110	141	202	11
Male	**402**	2	75	184	112	29
All students	**255260**	**18079**	**104949**	**90802**	**22190**	**19240**
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*7.7%*	*44.5%*	*38.5%*	*9.4%*	-
UK domiciled	**230049**	**16006**	**96463**	**80906**	**18618**	**18056**
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*7.6%*	*45.5%*	*38.2%*	*8.8%*	-
Female	**121621**	7755	55392	41985	7395	9094
Male	**108428**	8251	41071	38921	11223	8962
Overseas domiciled	**25211**	**2073**	**8486**	**9896**	**3572**	**1184**
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*8.6%*	*35.3%*	*41.2%*	*14.9%*	-
Female	**11040**	739	4176	4355	1275	495
Male	**14171**	1334	4310	5541	2297	689
All domiciles	**255260**	**18079**	**104949**	**90802**	**22190**	**19240**
Female	**132661**	8494	59568	46340	8670	9589
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*6.9%*	*48.4%*	*37.7%*	*7.0%*	-
Male	**122599**	9585	45381	44462	13520	9651
Percentage of known classification	***100.0%***	*8.5%*	*40.2%*	*39.4%*	*12.0%*	-

Derived from Table 14a

Overall, slightly more than 52% of students of known classification who obtained a classified first degree were awarded first or upper second class honours, with 7.7% being awarded a first. A slightly higher percentage of part-time students than full-time students obtained a first class degree, although this was compensated for by a lower proportion of upper seconds. Similarly, overseas students obtained a higher proportion of first class degrees but a markedly lower proportion of upper seconds.

The opposite observation is true of female students, with slightly fewer obtaining firsts than male students but a markedly greater proportion obtaining upper seconds, as is shown in the following chart.

Derived from Table 14a.

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All of these observations should however be considered in the context of the subject of study. The following table shows the percentage of students obtaining a first or upper second class award in each of the non-clinical subject groups (degrees in clinical subjects are predominantly awarded without classification).

Table M - First Degree Graduates in Non-clinical Subjects Awarded First or Upper Second Class Honours as a Percentage of Classified Degrees 1996/97

Percentages

	First Class	Upper Second	First or Upper Second
Subjects allied to medicine	*8.2*	*48.0*	*56.2*
Biological sciences	*8.3*	*50.0*	*58.3*
Agriculture & related subjects	*5.2*	*48.3*	*53.5*
Physical sciences	*10.8*	*38.0*	*48.8*
Mathematical sciences	*19.8*	*30.5*	*50.3*
Computer science	*9.9*	*34.5*	*44.4*
Engineering & technology	*12.2*	*34.0*	*46.3*
Architecture, building & planning	*5.9*	*38.4*	*44.3*
Social, economic & political studies	*5.0*	*47.8*	*52.8*
Law	*4.0*	*50.3*	*54.3*
Business & administrative studies	*3.7*	*40.6*	*44.3*
Librarianship & information science	*4.6*	*50.4*	*55.0*
Languages	*9.0*	*56.6*	*65.6*
Humanities	*7.4*	*56.5*	*63.9*
Creative arts & design	*9.0*	*45.8*	*54.8*
Education	*4.8*	*42.9*	*47.7*
Combined	*7.4*	*46.1*	*53.5*
Total - Non-clinical subjects	***7.6***	***44.7***	***52.3***

Derived from Table 14a

Table M reveals that a considerably greater proportion of first class degrees was awarded in mathematical sciences, engineering & technology and physical sciences - subjects in which a significant majority of male students was noted (see Table F). The inter-relationship between subject area, classification and other variables is complex, and is currently being investigated in detail by HESA. A report drawing on this work is expected to be published later in 1998.

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