

Foreword by the Chief Executive of HESA

HESA is pleased to present the annual official statistical overview of higher education in the United Kingdom (UK) for the year 1998/99. This is the seventh such volume in a series which was initiated by the Department for Education in 1993. With the recent introduction of a new framework for National Statistics, overseen by the Statistical Commission, this volume takes on a new significance as one of a number of publications which bear the National Statistics imprint.

The volume aims to present the major points of statistical information about all aspects of the UK higher education sector. It is unique in providing the basic figures not only about the students of higher education institutions, but also about applicants, staffing, finance, student support and other aspects of higher education provision.

The volume also includes summary statistics about study at higher education level in further education colleges, and it therefore presents figures illustrating the totality of higher education provision in publicly-funded institutions in the UK - provision which extends to 2,081,664 students on courses leading to higher education qualifications and credits. In addition there are 752,699 students on courses of professional and personal development not leading to such awards and 45,018 students on FE courses in higher education institutions.

The volume draws, to a certain extent, on material which is further analysed or elaborated upon in other HESA publications (described at the back of this volume), and also on material provided by the Student Loans Company, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the data collecting bodies for further education colleges. (It should be noted that, because of a joint decision to exclude some information which was exclusively concerned with The Open University, some of the tables have been re-numbered, and cannot be directly compared with tables in previous volumes.)

I would like to express the Agency's appreciation to all of the organisations which have made data available for the volume, and in particular to our colleagues in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) with whom we have worked closely in the preparation of the volume.

Brian Ramsden
Chief Executive