

Definitions

A. HESA Student Data

Coverage

Higher education (HE) students are those students on programmes of study that are of a standard that is higher than the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education, the Higher Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education, or the BTEC or SCOTVEC National Certificate/Diploma.

The HESA Student Record contains information about individual **enrolments**, which, because a student can be enrolled on more than one programme of study, will exceed the number of students. For ease of reading however, the terms enrolment and student have been used interchangeably throughout this volume.

The **HESA standard HE population** (Tables 0 to 7 and 18) has been derived from the HESA July Individualised Student Record. It includes all higher education enrolments as at 1 December 1998 except (i) dormant students (those who have ceased studying but have not formally de-registered), (ii) postdoctoral students and (iii) students studying for the whole of their programme of study outside of the UK. Students who left the institution prior to 1 December 1998, or who commenced a programme of study after this date are not included in the figures.

The **HESA session HE population** (Table 1) has been derived from the HESA July Individualised Student Record. It includes all higher education enrolments active at any point in the academic year 1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999 except (i) dormant students (those who have ceased studying but have not formally de-registered), (ii) postdoctoral students and (iii) students studying for the whole of their programme of study outside of the UK.

The **HESA qualifications obtained population** (Tables 5 and 8) is a count of student enrolments associated with the award of an HE qualification (excluding HE credits) during the period 1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999 inclusive. It does not include dormant students. This population includes all qualifications obtained during the 1998/99 reporting year which were returned to HESA by 15 November 1999.

Data relating to qualifications obtained cannot therefore be directly compared to the HESA standard HE population as it is possible for a student who has obtained his or her qualification prior to 1 December 1999 to be included in Tables 5 and 8 but excluded from Tables 1 to 7 and 18 (similarly a student can commence a programme of study and obtain a qualification after 1 December 1999).

Further Education

Further education (FE) students are those students on programmes of study at HE institutions who are studying at a standard that is equal to or lower than the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education, the Higher Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education, or the BTEC or SCOTVEC National Certificate/Diploma.

The **HESA standard FE population** (Table 1) has been derived from the HESA July Individualised Student Record. It is a count of all enrolments at HE institutions studying at FE level as at 1 December 1998 except dormant students (those who have ceased studying but have not formally de-registered). Students who left the institution prior to 1 December 1998, or who commenced a programme of study after this date are not included in the figures.

Full-time Equivalent

Student **full-time equivalent (FTE)** data (Table 1) represents the institutions assessment of the full-time equivalence of the student during the reporting year 1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999. The FTE data is based on the **HESA session population**.

Mode of Study

Full-time students include all students studying full-time (for more than or equal to 24 weeks in the academic year), students on thick or thin sandwich courses (except where they have been tabulated separately), and those on a study-related year out of their institution.

Part-time students include those studying part-time, on block release, during the evenings only or full-time for less than 24 weeks in the academic year.

Other modes of study includes those students writing-up theses or on sabbatical.

Level of Study

Postgraduate programmes of study are those leading to higher degrees, diplomas and certificates (including Postgraduate Certificates of Education (PGCEs) and professional qualifications) which usually require a first degree as an entry qualification.

Higher degrees include doctorates, masters degrees and higher bachelors degrees.

Other postgraduate includes postgraduate diplomas, certificates and professional qualifications, PGCEs, institutional postgraduate credits and no formal postgraduate qualification.

First degree includes first degrees, first degrees with eligibility to register to practice (doctor/dentist/veterinary surgeon), first degrees with qualified teacher status (QTS)/registration with the General Teaching Council (GTC) for Scotland, enhanced first degrees, first degrees obtained concurrently with a diploma and intercalated first degrees.

Other undergraduate includes Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), foundation courses at HE level, HND, HNC, NVQ/SVQ levels 5 and 4, post-degree diplomas and certificates at undergraduate level, professional qualifications at undergraduate level, other undergraduate diplomas and certificates, other formal HE qualifications of less than degree standard, institutional undergraduate credit and no formal undergraduate qualifications.

First Year Students

First year students are those students who commenced their programme in the 12 months up to 1 December 1999. In some cases the student's first year of study may be the second or subsequent year of a programme.

Domicile

Domicile data was supplied to HESA in the form of postcodes (UK domiciled students) or country codes. Postcodes were mapped to counties and unitary authorities and UK nations following consultation with Geoplan Postcode Marketing. Countries were mapped to geographical regions following consultation with the Department for Education and Employment. Where no data was supplied about the student's domicile, fee eligibility was used to determine whether domicile was UK, or overseas.

UK domiciled students are those normally resident in the UK, including those living in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Of those students from overseas, **Other European Union (EU)** students are those normally resident in countries which were EU members as at 1 December 1998. **Other Overseas** students are those whose normal place of residence prior to commencing their programme of study was outside the EU.

Age

Age is as at 31 August 1998.

Subject Areas

Programmes of study have been aggregated to 19 broad **subject areas**. The relationship of the academic content of the programme to the 19 areas has been compiled according to the following rules:

- a programme with a single subject is allocated to its area.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within one area, the programme is allocated to that area.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within more than one area, with a major/minor split, the programme is allocated to the area relating to the major part of study.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within more than one area, with an equal split, the programme is allocated to the 'Combined' area.

It should be noted that all subject combinations (major or minor) containing Initial Teacher Training (ITT) are included in the 'Education' subject area.

Highest Qualification on Entry

It should be noted that a student's **highest qualification on entry** is not necessarily that required for entry to the institution. Categories used are:

Postgraduate qualifications (excluding PGCE) includes all postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates excluding the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE).

PGCE - as described with and without QTS/GTC registration.

First degree of UK institution - as described plus undergraduate qualifications with QTS.

Other graduate and equivalent qualifications include graduate qualifications obtained outside the UK, NVQ/SVQ level 5 plus any other qualifications at graduate level not listed above.

HE credits include Open University credits and credits from other UK HE institutions.

Other HE and professional qualifications include certificates and diplomas of education, HNC or HND (including BTEC and SCOTVEC equivalents), diplomas in HE, NVQ/SVQ level 4, professional qualifications, foundation courses at HE level and other HE qualifications of less than degree standard.

GCE A-level, SCE Highers and equivalent - includes any combination of those described plus GNVQ/GSVQ level 3, NVQ/SVQ level 3, ONC or OND (including BTEC and SCOTVEC equivalents).

A-level equivalent qualifications - as described.

Access courses - as described (both accredited and unaccredited).

GCSE/O-level qualifications only; SCE O grades and Standard grades - as described.

Other qualifications include Baccalaureate, foundation courses at FE level, and any other qualifications not listed above.

No formal qualification required/held - the institution does not require the student to hold a qualification on entry or it is known that the student has no formal qualification.

Not known/sought - nothing is known about the student's qualifications on entry to their programme of study.

Location of Institution

The allocation of an institution to a geographical region relates only to the administrative centre of the institution. There may be students registered at institutions who are studying in regions other than that of the administrative centre of the institution. The Open University is counted as a wholly English institution. The administrative centre is located in England, although The Open University teaches throughout the UK..

Classification of First Degrees

Certain qualifications obtained at first degree level are not subject to classification of award, notably medical and general degrees. These, together with ordinary degrees, have been included within the unclassified category. Third class honours, fourth class honours and the pass category have been aggregated. Lower second and undivided second class honours have been aggregated.

B. HESA First Destination Supplement (FDS) Data

Coverage

The **HESA (FDS) target population** includes all students reported to HESA for the reporting period 1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999 as obtaining relevant qualifications (see 'Level of Qualification Obtained' section) and whose study was full-time (including sandwich students and those writing-up theses). The definition of full-time is different from that used in the section HESA Student Data. In particular, writing-up students **are included** in the definition of full-time on the first destination return, but **not** on the Individualised Student Record.

The **HESA FDS target population** therefore contains all higher education (HE) students for whom first destination data was expected. However, the figures contained in this volume reflect the destinations of only the students for whom data was provided to HESA by institutions. Approximately 79.5% of students for whom first destination information was expected had data returned to HESA.

The **reference date** for the FDS was 31 December 1999. Institutions were asked to report the destinations of qualifiers in the target population which had been firmly determined by this date and which took effect not later than 31 March 2000.

Relevant qualifications for the first destination return are postgraduate degrees, Postgraduate Certificates in Education (PGCEs), first degrees (excludes intercalated degrees), Diplomas of Higher Education, Certificates of Higher Education, Higher National Diplomas or Higher National Certificates. Therefore the population for the FDS return does not necessarily represent the full cohort graduating during the reporting period.

Level of Qualification Obtained

Postgraduate qualifications include doctorate degrees, masters degrees, higher bachelors degrees and PGCEs.

First degrees are first degrees, first degrees with eligibility to register to practice (doctor/dentist/veterinary surgeon), first degrees with qualified teacher status(QTS)/registration with the General Teaching Council (GTC) for Scotland, enhanced first degrees and first degrees obtained concurrently with diplomas.

Other undergraduate qualifications are all higher education qualifications not included above which are within the scope of the FDS.

Age

Age on completion is as at 31 July 1999.

Subject Areas

Programmes of study have been aggregated to 19 broad **subject areas**. The relationship of the academic content of the programme to the 19 areas has been compiled according to the following rules:

- a programme with a single subject is allocated to its area.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within one area, the programme is allocated to that area.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within more than one area, with a major/minor split, the programme is allocated to the area relating to the major part of study.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within more than one area, with an equal split, the programme is allocated to the 'Combined' area.

It should be noted that all subject combinations (major or minor) containing Initial Teacher Training (ITT) are included in the 'Education' subject area.

First Destination

All former students for whom first destination data was supplied reported a **main activity** (i.e. a respondent's first destination could not be given as 'unknown'). The main activities specified by HESA, and therefore the codes into which respondents reported principal activity needed to be assigned were:

- 01 Entered work (paid or unpaid, including voluntary work)
- 02 Returned to/remained with previous employer
- 03 Self-employed
- 04 Undertaking study or training
- 05 Seeking employment or training
- 06 Not available for employment, study or training
- 07 Overseas student returning overseas (no other information available)

A respondent could also have a **secondary activity**.

Codes available were:

- 01 Full-time employment (paid or unpaid, including voluntary work)
- 02 Part-time employment (paid or unpaid, including voluntary work)
- 03 Self-employed
- 04 Full-time further study or training
- 05 Part-time further study or training
- 06 Professional preparation time, e.g. portfolio preparation
- 07 Looking for a job or course
- 09 No other activity

It should be noted that, in compiling the tables in this volume, unless otherwise stated below, the destination of a respondent has been taken to be their main activity.

The definition of **employed/employment** includes main activity codes 01, 02 and 03.

The definition of **assumed to be unemployed** is those students with 05 as their main activity and 07 or 09 as their secondary activity.

The definition of **others** is those students with 05 as their main activity and 01, 02, 03, 04, 05 or 06 as their secondary activity.

The Standard Occupational Classification

The **Standard Occupational Classification** (SOC) was developed as an interdepartmental standard for coding occupational information in official survey and census sources, and to facilitate the job matching/placing activities of the Employment Service. An expanded version of the SOC has been created for the coding of occupational information contained in the survey of first destinations of qualifiers from HE institutions. This classification is termed the SOC(FDS). As far as possible, comparability with other SOC-based data sources is provided at the **major group** level.

C. HESA Non-credit-bearing (NCB) Course Data

Coverage

The figures contained in Table 10 relate to student enrolments on courses with the reporting institution or a subsidiary company (excluding in-house courses for institutional employees) which do not lead to a qualification or institutional credit. These enrolments were reported to HESA during the reporting period **1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999**.

Level of Course

Courses have been allocated to two categories, **HE/advanced** and **FE/non-advanced**. HE/advanced courses are defined as those for which the level of instruction is above that of courses leading to GCE A-levels, SCE Highers, ONC and OND. **All levels** includes, in addition to the above, courses which were classed as mixed HE/FE and courses for which the level could not be determined.

Subject Areas

The subjects of NCB courses have been aggregated to 19 broad **subject areas**. The relationship of the academic content of the course to the 19 areas has been compiled according to the following rules:

- a programme with a single subject is allocated to its area.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within one area, the programme is allocated to that area.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within more than one area, with a major/minor split, the programme is allocated to the area relating to the major part of study.
- if a combination of two subjects lies within more than one area, with an equal split, the programme is allocated to the 'Combined' area.
- subject combinations containing education are included in the 'Education' subject area.

D. HESA Staff Data

Coverage

Academic staff are defined as those whose primary employment function is **teaching only, teaching and research or research only**. Staff data relates to individual academic appointments (of at least 25% full-time equivalence) active during the academic year 1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999. The population excludes those members of staff who left their employment (but not necessarily the institution) before 1 August 1998.

Mode of Employment

Full-time staff are those whose contracts state that their mode of employment is full-time.

Part-time staff are those whose salaries are regular and calculated as a proportion of the full-time rate. This category also includes casual staff, those paid hourly and any staff whose mode of employment could not be assigned as full-time.

Principal Source of Salary

Wholly institutionally financed staff are those who are paid wholly from general institution funds.

Principally institutionally financed staff are paid mainly from general institution funds and partly from another source.

Other sources of finance include staff paid mainly or wholly from sources other than general institution funds. These other sources include OST research councils, UK charities, UK government bodies health & hospital authorities, UK industry, commerce and public corporations, EU sources, other overseas sources and other sources not listed.

Clinical Status

Non-clinical staff are those not on clinical rates whether medically qualified or not.

Clinical staff are those on clinical rates whether or not holding honorary contracts with the NHS.

Primary Employment Function

Teaching/Teaching & research staff are those whose contracts of employment state that they are teaching only or teaching and research.

Research only staff are those whose contracts of employment state that they are research only.

Grade

The grade structure indicates a staff member's grade for their present employment. Groups of grades have been devised with regard to the different grading scales used within different institutions. Grades have not however, been linked to salary information.

Professors includes heads of departments, professors, former UAP scale researchers (grade IV), clinical professors and those appointed professors on a locally determined scale.

Senior lecturers and researchers includes principal lecturers, senior lecturers (former UAP/CSCFC scales), former UAP scale researchers (grade III), clinical senior lecturers and those appointed senior or principal lecturers on a locally determined scale.

Lecturers includes lecturers, senior lecturers (former PCEF scale), clinical lecturers and those appointed lecturers on a locally determined scale.

Researchers includes all research grades not listed above and those researchers appointed on a locally determined scale.

Other grades includes other grades of academic staff not listed above.

Analysis by 'staff grade' is only meaningful where institutions have reported their staff within nationally recognised grade structures or within internal grade structures which facilitate differentiation on a similar basis. Several institutions, including some large post-1992 universities, report their staff on a single grade structure, and therefore, for example, the number of professors is significantly under-counted for these institutions, and for the sector as a whole. The Agency therefore advises caution in analysis of staff by grade.

E. HESA Finance Data

Coverage

Financial data in Tables 15 and 16 relates to the institutions' financial year, i.e. 1 August 1998 to 31 July 1999.

Sources of Income

Funding Council Grants

Funding council grants include those from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).

Higher education (HE) provision includes recurrent grants and capital grants as defined below in respect of higher education provision, except in Scotland where this category also includes grants for further education (FE) provision.

Recurrent grants includes the block grant (or main and associated grants) for teaching, research and other recurrent grants as stated in the annual grant letters or additional letters from the funding council.

Capital grants includes all non-recurrent grants from the funding council to support special initiatives and capital grants in respect of buildings and equipment.

FE provision includes all funding council grants for the provision of FE. This category does not apply to SHEFC funded institutions as they do not receive separately identified grants for FE provision.

Academic Fees and Support Grants

This includes all income received in respect of fees for students on courses for which fees are charged.

Full-time HE fees - standard rates includes standard fees for full-time and sandwich degree, diploma and similar award-bearing courses for home and European Community (EC) domiciled students.

Full-time HE fees – non-standard rates includes all other fees for full-time and sandwich degree, diploma and similar award-bearing courses for home and EC domiciled students.

Part-time HE fees includes fees for part-time degree, diploma and similar award-bearing courses for home and EC domiciled students.

Overseas domicile includes fees for all degree, diploma and similar award-bearing courses for non-home and non-EC domiciled students.

Non-credit-bearing course fees includes all fee income received in respect of non-credit-bearing liberal adult education, non-credit-bearing continuing education or extra-mural courses.

Other fees and support grants includes fee income received for the provision of FE/non-advanced courses and all grants made by research councils and other bodies in support of the training of research students. This includes bench fees and Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE).

Research Grants and Contracts

This includes all income in respect of externally sponsored research carried out by the institution for which directly related expenditure has been incurred.

Other Operating Income

Other services rendered includes all income in respect of services rendered to outside bodies, including the supply of goods and consultancies.

Residences and catering operations includes the gross income from residences, catering and conference operations.

Other general income includes grants from local authorities, income from health and hospital authorities, income released from deferred capital grants, income from intellectual property rights and all other operating income not covered above.

Endowment Income and Interest Receivable

This includes all income from specific endowments, general endowments and interest receivable.

Categories of Expenditure

Staff costs includes costs in respect of academic staff (defined as staff whose primary employment function is teaching and/or research) and all other staff, paid from within the budgets of academic departments and allocated to the appropriate cost centre.

Other costs include **depreciation** (depreciation costs on equipment capitalised according to where the assets being depreciated are located), **other operating expenses** (costs in respect of payments to non-contracted staff or individuals, all other non-staff costs, equipment which has not been depreciated, expenditure on maintenance contracts and telephone costs (calls, rental and non-capitalised equipment) if not charged to departments) and **interest payable** (costs in respect of interest payable on premises, residences and catering operations, and other expenditure).

Expenditure Activities

Academic Departments

This includes all expenditure directly incurred by or on behalf of academic departments which is not reimbursable by research councils or other bodies in respect of work carried out on their behalf.

Academic Services

This includes expenditure incurred on centralised academic services such as the library, learning resource centres, central computers, etc.

Administration and Central Services

This includes expenditure incurred on central administration, general educational expenditure and staff and student facilities and amenities.

Premises

This includes all expenditure incurred on the maintenance of premises and on roads and ground (except residences and catering).

Residences and Catering Operations

This includes expenditure incurred in providing the residence, catering and any conference operations, including the cost of maintenance of residential and catering premises, salaries and any other identifiable costs relating to these operations.

Research Grants and Contracts

This section includes the total of the direct costs attributed to research grants and contracts as detailed for research grants and contracts income.

Other

This section includes the total of the direct costs attributed to other services rendered and any expenditure not covered by other expenditure activities.

F. UCAS Data

Coverage

1998 Entry

The term institution is used to cover the 254 participating member of UCAS (all UK universities, with the exception of The Open University, most colleges of higher education and some colleges of further education offering courses of higher education) for 1998 entry. The list includes ten new institutions, while seven colleges merged with either new or existing member institutions.

1999 Entry

The term institution is used to cover the 259 participating members of UCAS (all the UK universities, with the exception of The Open University, most colleges of higher education and some colleges of further education offering courses of higher education) for 1999 entry. The list includes ten new institutions, while two colleges merged with other member institutions.

Whole Population

Applicants are those who send an application form to UCAS containing at least one degree, DipHE or HND course at a university or college in membership of the scheme. The total number of applicants is those whose forms were processed by UCAS, irrespective of when they applied and whether or not they withdrew during the applications cycle. With regard to subject preference, applicants are classified according to the most frequently listed subject amongst their applications.

Accepted applicants are those who have been offered and accepted a place on a degree, DipHE or HND course at a university or college in membership of the scheme, whether or not they subsequently enrol for the course. Those who applied too late for usual procedures and were accepted ('late registrations') are included in the total applicant figure and in the acceptances through clearing.

Applicants are classed as **home (UK)** or **overseas** based on the area of permanent residence given by them on the application form. There is no direct correlation between the classification used in the UCAS tables and that used as a basis for fees assessment.

Classification of Academic Subjects

The classification used by UCAS is based on that formerly used by the Polytechnics Central Admissions Systems (PCAS) and the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), which differs to some extent from the HESA classification of subject areas.

More detailed definitions are contained within the **UCAS Standard Classification of Academic Subjects**, as placed on the UCAS website <http://wwwucas.ac.uk>.

Region of Domicile or Region of Institution

The region of domicile for UK applicants and the region of institution which offered them a place (for both degree and HND courses) is identified using Government Office Regions (GOR), which are now employed in government statistics.

G. Student Loans Data

The numbers of students taking out loans, and the amounts borrowed, have been obtained from data supplied to the DfEE by the **Students Loans Company**.

Loans are available to most 'home' students on full-time or sandwich undergraduate courses, and to students on full-time and part-time postgraduate courses of initial teacher training (PGCE). The loans are limited to those who are aged less than 50 years old when they begin their course (although the age qualification will change from academic year 1999/2000).

New student support arrangements in higher education came into effect from the start of the 1998/99 academic year. For **new** entrants to higher education, 1998/99 was a transitional year. They were, with certain specified exceptions, expected to contribute up to £1,000 a year towards the cost of their tuition. The amount depended on their own and, if appropriate, their parents' or spouse's income. For the first year of the new scheme (1998/99), eligible new entrants received support for living costs through both grants and loans. Grants, which were assessed against family income, on average formed about a quarter of the support available. All students were entitled to a non income-assessed loan, which comprised the remaining three quarters of support available, and which will be repayable on an income contingent basis. Those borrowers who took out the new style loans in 1998/99 who left their studies before April 1999 and who would normally enter repayment status at the start of the 1999-2000 financial year have been granted a repayment holiday until April 2000.

New entrants to higher education in 1999/2000, together with those who started in 1998/99, will receive support for living costs solely through loans which will be partly income-assessed. Grants for living costs will no longer be available except for some limited allowances, e.g. for students with dependants; single parent students; and disabled students. Grants for students with dependants and single parent students will be income-assessed but the Disabled Students' Allowance will not.

The amount available to students through loans will be increased to compensate for the reduction in grants. Repayment of these loans will be linked to income after leaving university or college so that leavers only repay as and when they can afford to (whilst the loans of those who started their course before 1998/99 are repayable on a mortgage style basis).

The financial support arrangements in 1998/99 for **existing** mandatory award holders and other students on courses which began before 1 August 1998, and those new students who are treated exceptionally as existing award holders for the purposes of the Mandatory Awards Regulations (e.g. gap year students), remain largely unchanged. Tuition fees continue to be paid in full by LEAs where the student is eligible for a mandatory award and such students also receive a grant towards their maintenance, depending on income, for the duration of their course. All existing students remain eligible for loans repayable on a mortgage style basis.

Figures obtained from HESA statistics indicate that the number of students eligible for student loans in UK universities and publicly-funded HE institutions was over 887,000 in the academic year 1998/99. In addition, it is estimated that some 74,000 students on HE courses in FE institutions and a further 9,000 students attending designated courses at National Health Service (NHS) institutions, at overseas and at private institutions are also eligible. These student population figures have been used to calculate the take-up rate in Table 17.

H. International Comparisons Data

The DfEE supplies summary statistics on behalf of the UK, to a joint questionnaire compiled by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Table 19 has been compiled using data supplied by various countries to the international bodies and in particular, data derived from the OECD's own publication, 'Education at a Glance'. There are inevitably a number of problems of comparability and interpretation in using this table, and readers are advised to read the footnotes carefully. The main aspects to be borne in mind are:

- The underlying educational systems need to be understood, as far as possible, in interpreting these comparisons. As an aid to understanding the differences between the various countries, up to date information about the different educational systems in the European Union is available from, EURYDICE, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2DQ.
- Within HE three sub-divisions are recognised internationally, levels 5A, 5B and 6. Level 5A courses are largely theoretically based, with a minimum of 3 years full-time-equivalent duration. In the UK, first and higher degree qualifications (excluding PhDs) are included at this level. Level 5B qualifications are more practically-oriented and occupationally specific than programmes at ISCED 5A. They have a minimum of 2 years' full-time-equivalent duration. In the UK these comprise 'sub-degree' qualifications such as the DipHE, BTEC Higher National (HND/HNC), nursing, and other professional qualifications. Level 6 is reserved for advanced research qualifications - in the UK, the PhD is included at this level.
- Although renewed efforts have been made to standardise education classifications, through a revised International Standard Classification of Education, the definition of HE may be interpreted slightly differently by different countries. In some countries the Masters degree is the first degree in higher education and in others, the higher education system is oriented towards vocationally-based, level 5B courses, considered to be of an equal standing to level 5A courses.
- The range of public and private provision and definition of the public/private sectors will vary from country to country.
- Participation rates can be influenced by a number of factors including varying course lengths and drop out rates.